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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts — March 1, 1969, 40 cents

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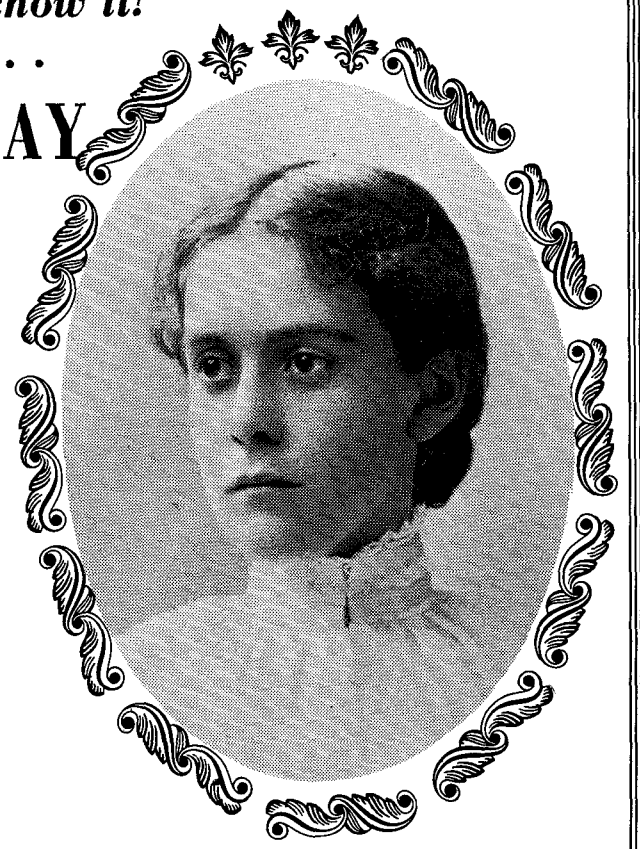

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TRB

From Washington

Mr. Cool

The telephone rang in Vice President Nixon's office in early March, 1960, and his old friend, business cycle pundit Arthur Burns, was on the line from New York. Yes, he said, this was important; he had waited till the last minute but now he was reasonably sure. Unless Gen. Eisenhower took steps there was going to be another recession. It would hit its low in October – just before the election.

The prospective GOP Presidential nominee knew what *that* meant. And he had utmost confidence in the careful, unexcitable professional competence of the man who formerly had been Eisenhower's top economic adviser. Burns came down to Washington and Nixon pleaded with the Administration to apply the Keynesian prescription: cut taxes or start spending. Gen. Eisenhower took it up with his rock-ribbed cabinet who said, No; do nothing. As Mr. Nixon wrote, in retrospect, in his book, *Six Crises*, several experts "did not share" the Burns prognosis, and also "there was strong sentiment against using the spending and credit powers of the federal government to affect the economy" short of a "major recession." Well, you can hear Mr. Nixon's teeth grinding even now in spite of his mild words. The recession (the third under Eisenhower's conservative supervision) arrived punctually ("Arthur Burns turned out to be a good prophet," said Nixon); the dip came in October just as predicted; and it defeated Richard Nixon. "All the speeches, television broadcasts, and precinct work in the world," he wrote, "could not counteract that one hard fact."

Counselor Burns' comfortable, red-carpeted office on the second floor of the granite Executive Office Building is right across from the White House. That's his title: Counselor of the President, with Cabinet rank – the only man in history to be officially so dubbed. And he's a mystery. There have been various ways of trying to describe this ex-professor's job; "minister without portfolio," an Englishman might say: "Delegate-president for domestic affairs" is another. The fact is, his post is without precedent or parallel; he's The White House Thinker in Residence.

Burns has a great waterfall of iron-gray hair parted in the middle that breaks on his forehead like water at the prow of a ship; he wears rimless glasses and he is normally reaming out the unsatisfactory inside of one of his 100 pipes. Obviously, a scholar like this should be tweedy and absent-minded and drop ashes like FDR's Harry Hopkins; on the contrary, he is formidably focused, and well-tailored (with vest and matching tie). He is Mister Calm-Cool-Deliberate, himself.

General Eisenhower had Sherman Adams as a sort of chief-of-staff, but the role is different for Counselor Burns. Adams sat in a nearby office and directed the visitor-flow in and out of the Eisenhower suite; he did not innovate, he was a kind of glorified orderly. Burns will not see the President so often, but when he does it will be more important; he will not only coordinate domestic programs, he will recommend them. Furthermore, he has a relationship of trust with the President where he will be listened to. Mr. Nixon does not make intimates readily but those who win the inner circle are proportionately important; they include William Rogers at State, John Mitchell, Attorney General, and Robert Finch, HEW. One can only begin to sense what effect the quiet, powerful Burns presence will have in setting the tone of things.

By standards of the Eisenhower cabinet (George M. Humphrey, say, or Robert Anderson, his successor in the Treasury post) Burns was almost a radical. This means that he accepted what American colleges had taught – for a generation – and what all European countries practiced, indeed what Mr. Nixon himself described as "using the spending and credit powers" of the government to balance the economy. (The Kennedy-Johnson 1964 tax cut, for example, was made in spite of a deficit, and it aborted a recession.)

But standards change swiftly and Burns today would be described by many economists as middle-of-the-road, or right-of-center, in fact as solid and substantial as the delightful old granite, gingerbread structure in which he works. It was built in General Grant's time and because its four-foot walls are solid rock, all the modernizing accretions are stuck incongruously along the sides; fluorescent lights in aluminum ice-cube receptacles cling to the ceiling where the old propellor fans used to turn; pipes and plumbing climb the walls, and electric cables coil out of the transoms like snakes. Forty years ago it was still called the "State, War and Navy" building, for this one edifice housed all three departments.

Now the departments, and others like them, swarm all over Washington. What the Administration would like to do is halt this federal efflorescence; every Republican President in memory has harbored the same wild dream.

In this solid structure one senses the chasm that separates the Nixon and LBJ regimes, which, I think, is only beginning to appear. Here and in the White House across the way is the Republican skepticism of New Deals and "wars on poverty"; the deep empathy with private enterprise; the touching belief in the loving-kindness of large corporations. Mr. Nixon wants to enlist business by tax incentives (subsidies) in cleaning up the ghettoes – one of the few threads that ran clearly and continuously through his campaign. He is going to push the plan, and it may well mark the end of the political honeymoon.

Many here believe that before long Mr. Nixon's drive for price stability will increase unemployment (though it is heresy to admit it). Judging by past writings, Burns might reluctantly go along. It would be a matter of "value judgments," he has written. He would not decide lightly. He is a man with a deep feeling of responsibility and dedication; one who, in time of crisis would be unflappable.

Today Burns thinks he feels in the air a malaise – a loss of responsibility, discipline, dedication. Asked recently what he considers his job to be, he reamed out his pipe and replied, thoughtfully, to try to cure *that*.

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Nixon And NATO

President Nixon's swing around West Europe this week ought to be the beginning of a thorough reassessment, long overdue, of this country's NATO policy. NATO has its twentieth birthday next month, in Washington. In those 20 years, our NATO allies have received approximately $20 billion in military assistance from the United States. Additionally, there's the annual cost of maintaining more than 300,000 US troops, and 260,000 dependents, in Europe. What has all this spending achieved? NATO came into being because the Communists had seized Czechoslovakia and tried to blockade Berlin. They are still trying to isolate West Berlin, and Russian troops are back in Czechoslovakia. Mr. Nixon, following in the footsteps of his two predecessors, will go to Berlin and chalk it up as a NATO gain. But what protects Berlin isn't the expensive presence, year after year, of six US divisions in West Germany. It's everyone's knowledge that an attack on Berlin would touch off nuclear war, which equals instant suicide. This knowledge helped General de Gaulle decide on throwing NATO out of France. NATO has other absurdities and anomalies. There are 3,000 US military in Greece, which is a dictatorship, and more American troops in Spain, another. For this and because of Vietnam, the American military presence is abhorred by the European generation that has grown up with NATO. If we don't quit voluntarily, we may find ourselves being thrown out of other countries besides France.

So, instead of helping the West German government through their 1969 elections by making a big deal to maintain US troop strength around present levels for at least another three or four years, President Nixon should:

► offer to phase out US ground and air forces in a bid to encourage withdrawal of Soviet forces from East Europe, as suggested by Senator Mike Mansfield;

► invite both East and West Germany into the UN;

► invite them both to be members of a new European Security Commission, along with France, Britain, and Italy, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania;

► support the notion of a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe, a zone to include both Germanies, and with an inspection system utilizing overlapping radar screens or other mutually agreed devices.

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All this would fit quite well with a bit of advice tendered in 1966 by Mr. Nixon's top security adviser, Professor Henry Kissinger: "The major initiatives to improve relations between West and East Europe should originate in Europe, with the US in a reserve position." Kissinger also said: "What we need today is another leap of the imagination, similar to what took place two decades ago." Right; but, this time, a leap in the opposite direction.

Song of the Gung-Ho Gladiators

The pacification program in South Vietnam is claiming great – one might say, unbelievable – progress. That being so, why risk any compromise with the enemy; the war in the South can be *won*, on our terms, so the gung-ho gladiators say. US headquarters (Saigon) reports that nearly two million additional rural Vietnamese have been extended "protection" since the end of September as a result of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. Nearly half of these, it reports, formerly lived under Vietcong control; the rest were formerly "contested." The monthly Hamlet Evaluation Survey (HES) for December showed 76.3 percent of the nation's 17.5 million inhabitants living in "relatively secure" areas, up ten points since September and an all-time high. "The Government of Vietnam is clearly winning the pacification war," Ambassador Robert Komer said on his return from Saigon, where he directed the office for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS); "this fact will help determine the shape of a settlement in Paris."

Pacification reports are the US mission's hallucinogen. During the same period, September to December, a minimum of 400 to 500 Vietnamese civilians died each week as a result of the fighting, about two-thirds of them women or children under 14. (This estimate is derived from monthly figures compiled by the Vietnamese Health Ministry on persons with war-connected injury admitted to South Vietnamese provincial hospitals. The figures probably understate the civilian war casualties by half or more.) Allied military combat deaths during the period, including American, South Vietnamese and others, averaged about 350 a week. One is tempted to ask whether "relatively secure" is a yardstick of safety for military personnel or for local residents. Since the December pacification figures were released, Vietcong "terror incidents" have risen 30 percent; numerous "secure" provincial capitals, towns, villages and hamlets have been hit. The countryside is still in turmoil.

In a recent study for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. John V. Tunney (D, Calif.) shows that the pacification reporting system, HES, is particularly vulnerable to distortion because of the mission's ever-present desire to show "progress." Tunney's study is backed up by a detailed report by the General Accounting Office, which the Pentagon has classified "confidential" in order to prevent publication. It also is confirmed by news stories from Vietnam, such as David Hoffman's in the Jan. 28 *Washington Post*, which reports that some American generals dismiss the HES as "just a numbers game we're playing for Paris."

HES is a Komer brainchild. Monthly reports on nearly 13,000 hamlets are supplied by the 232 American officers serving as advisers to South Vietnamese district-level officials. About 4,000 hamlets are Vietcong controlled, but for each of the others the district adviser has to fill out a complex worksheet listing 18 standards of progress, each graded from A (best) to E (worst). These calculations are averaged to produce a monthly grade for each hamlet. C or better is "relatively secure," D and E are "contested." Communist controlled hamlets are graded V. Then the grades are fed into a computer that provides a measure of overall progress.

Tunney found that American district advisers seldom spend more than four or five months in a district and usually lack the language training and knowledge of Vietcong ways necessary to make accurate assessments. Frequently they grade hamlets they have not visited for lack of time, relying on hearsay or merely repeating the former assessment. Having found that HES reports are used by superiors to measure their own job productivity, district advisers are under pressure not to report backsliding, or to admit that they or their predecessors had been over-optimistic.

The district advisers are supposed to oversee all "nation-building" efforts in their districts, and the pressure of too many commitments may explain some shoddy reporting. But the faults that Tunney finds in the pacification reporting system turn up in more professional intelligence efforts as well. Whether military or CIA, the intelligence men are bureaucrats, after all, and subject to their bosses' displeasure; which is one reason why independent news reporting from Vietnam has been more in touch with reality than official reporting.

Successive intelligence shortcomings – the underestimation of Vietcong/Hanoi military strength in 1965-67; the miscalculation of Hanoi's determination; the surprise effect of the Tet offensive; the almost single-minded concentration on the large-unit military threat, to the exclusion of study of Vietcong political methods and activities – certainly justify a reexamination of the whole intelligence process in Vietnam.

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Diseased Estuaries

When a river hits the tides and flattens into a broad, brackish, slow moving pool, what you have is an estuary. Marine scientists commonly describe estuaries (bays, harbors, tidelands), as the septic tanks of megalopis because they're so polluted. Easily half of those 46,000 convoluted shoreline miles between Maine and Texas are worsening under real estate development, dredging, landfill, pesticide runoff, nitrates and phosphates from eroding farmlands and from incomplete sewage treatment and diseased river water.

Chesapeake Bay, a grand and gracious estuary, is being threatened by hot water discharge from power plants and by those nitrates and phosphates from sewage and farms. Hot water tips the ecology of sections of the bay and threatens that balance of biological relationships needed for the survival of fish and shellfish. Nitrates and phosphates promote the growth of surface algae. On summer nights the algae suck off the naturally dissolved oxygen in the bay's waters, robbing oysters, crabs and clams of breathing air.

The waters of Florida's Biscayne Bay are becoming choked by land filling for new homesites and, again, by chemical runoff. Native vegetation and animal life are being replaced by biological flotsam – plants and fish that nobody wants.

Three destructive forces are at work on San Francisco Bay. The first is pesticide and fertilizer chemicals, borne by the waters of the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers that run into the bay and pollute it. The second insult is land filling, a hungry force that already has consumed 17 square miles of the bay's total area of 435 square miles, and threatens another 240 square miles. Finally, water resource planners look ahead to damming streams in the upper valleys to create additional water-supply impoundments and reduce the meager flow of fresh water into the bay.

There are, of course, pollution control laws that promise a cleaner aquatic America. Eventually every locality will have secondary sewage treatment – guaranteed removal of bacteria. But algae-promoting nitrates and phosphates, plus an enormous variety of chemicals no treatment plants can handle, will remain.

Dredging, landfilling and pesticides, too, will exert their own form of strangulation. There as yet are no strong regulations to prevent that combination of degradation. In southern Maryland where the Potomac estuary meets the Chesapeake Bay, the Steuart Petroleum Co. is pushing plans for erecting an oil refinery at Piney Point on the Potomac. St. Mary's County – whose taxable income, now that slot machines are illegal, more than ever depends on the bay's fish haul – has so far beaten back Steuart's persistence. But the political pressure has been unremitting. On the Chesapeake side, at fossil-strewn Calvert Cliffs in Calvert County, a nuclear power station will by 1973 be pouring hundreds of millions of gallons of heated cooling water daily into the western side of the bay. Proper controls haven't been worked out because the effects of heat changes are poorly understood.

The Federal Water Pollution Control Administration and the Fish and Wildlife Service are sponsoring separate studies on the economic importance and preservation of the estuaries. Estuary scientists will tell you that studies of that type, while nice, are just delaying the needed solutions. Experts know what's wrong with their estuaries. They can point to industries like Bethlehem Steel, whose works at Sparrows Point, Md., pours the equivalent of 400 tons of sulfuric acid into the Chesapeake Bay each day. They know the problem is a lack of political initiative.

An Open Presidency

"It's time we once again had an open administration – open to ideas from the people, and open in its communication with the people – an administration of open doors, open eyes, and open minds."

Richard M. Nixon, September 19, 1968

The Public Records Act, signed by President Lyndon Johnson July 4, 1966 was meant to spring loose more information from the federal bureaucracy. But it is not self-enforcing and has not, yet, been aggressively administered. If you think information is being withheld that by rights should be yours, you may appeal to the head of the agency holding the information. To go beyond this one must go to court, and the burden of proof there rests with the agency to justify its withholding. Only federal court action and the intervention of Congressman John Moss (D, Calif.) persuaded General Lewis Hershey to make public the names of local draft board members.

Without strong executive support, the Freedom of Information Act means little. It has been in effect for over a year, but only two agencies, HEW and the Civil Aeronautics Board have set up effective information programs. Conversely, and in the traditional pattern of bureaucratic secrecy, various devices have been used to defeat the letter and spirit of the law. For instance, the Federal Trade Commission still places the burden of proof upon the person requesting the information ("Why do you want it?") – a violation of the Act. Rates for searching for information vary capriciously from agency to agency. (The Post Office Department charges eight dollars an hour to search for documents.) Votes of the members of the Export-Import Bank are available only when a member places a formal dissent into the record.

Administrative and regulatory agencies make nu-

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merous far-reaching decisions, and these should have the same careful scrutiny as acts of Congress. But as long as administrative activities, including votes, are buried under a mountain of extraneous material, they will not get proper press attention. One example is the special committee of the Interstate Commerce Commission that considers the discontinuance of passenger trains. It votes often enough so that individual members establish a position of pro- or anti-passenger train. But these votes are not compiled so that the public can judge. The new Administration could, however, establish procedures for identifying, indexing and distributing such decisions.

The Freedom of Information Act allows withholding information that might endanger national security. What that means is determined by executive order. Recently, a Stanford University researcher was refused permission to review a 23-year-old, "top-secret" World War II document involving repatriated Russian soldiers. It is absurd to think its release "could result in exceptionally grave danger to the nation." Thousands of documents still carry these classified labels and are not available to the public unless court action is taken to obtain them. The labels often remain for no reason other than inertia, or because disclosure might embarrass some government official. President Nixon can change this by implementing Section 16 of Executive Order 10501 – the basic document establishing information classification. This order authorizes the appointment of a member of the Presidential staff to act on complaints concerning improper classification – in effect an *ombudsman* for information.

The whole area of information technology offers another opportunity for leadership. Government information is now distributed through depository libraries or is available in individual agency files. Attention should be given to modernizing the retrieval and distribution of this information.

Biafra Has Oil as Well As Starving Children

by Steven Jervis

Only four states, all African, have recognized Nigeria's breakaway Eastern Region, Biafra. Yet the civil war has become ominously internationalized, stirring memories of the Congo. The war is tribal in origin. But foreign powers see something in it for them. Biafra has been helped by Portugal and France; England and Russia are Nigeria's main backers. By furnishing Nigeria with arms, the British seek to maintain influence there. Moscow again seeks a West African foothold, but the Nigerian government is not about to mortgage itself to the Soviet Union. Portugal for a year provided Biafra's link to the world, and would like to see the disintegration of Nigeria, Africa's largest state and a threat to Portuguese Angola and Mozambique. France has become the key Biafran ally. Flying in arms from Gabon, their ex-colony, the French have altered the course of the war. On the edge of collapse a few months ago, Biafra seems set for a long struggle. SAFRAP, the French oil company, was drilling in the region before Biafra's secession, but the main concessionaires were British, Dutch and American. The Biafran leader, Col. Ojukwu, is believed to have ceded oil rights to the French. De Gaulle has all but recognized the secessionists, proclaiming a "Biafra Day" and talking of self-determination.

American involvement with Biafra, though essentially nonmilitary, galls the Nigerians more than De Gaulle does. On my recent trip, I was confronted by troubled Nigerian professors who were trained in this country and felt betrayed and bewildered by "American support for the rebels." They scoffed at our humanitarian claims, which contrast so awkwardly with our behavior in Vietnam. Mrs. Nixon's appearance at a Biafra rally and the virtual gift of eight valuable aircraft to relief agencies were bitter blows: one Nigerian newspaper forecast an American invasion, others saw a NATO plot to break up the country. There is fear (encouraged by Radio Biafra) of American recognition for Ojukwu's regime. "The Red Cross," one army commander told me, "are murderers. Their food is going to the soldiers, not to the starving. They are prolonging the war."

Such sentiments are profoundly shocking to most Americans, who see that in Biafra children are dying and conclude that we must feed them. Washington has given $20 million to help war victims, with more to come. But what seems pure compassion here, looks like willful interference in Lagos. Nigerians point out that Ojukwu impeded relief efforts from the first, with sensational but spurious warnings of "poison," and refused daylight flights and a land corridor for food and medicine. Washington's "neutrality" seems fraudulent, for how can you equate a country with a diminishing rebellious fragment? And why are allegations of Nigerian genocide, carefully refuted by teams of international observers, still bandied about in the Western press?

Most disappointing to Nigerian intellectuals has been the Left in Europe and America, almost solid for Biafra. Conor Cruise O'Brien attacked Lagos at the beginning of the conflict and Sartre, followed by I. F. Stone, has retailed the charge of genocide. Ojukwu is becoming a left-wing hero – an implausible role for the rather conservative son of a knighted millionaire, who has propped up his regime with old-guard politicians. Nigerians perceive an enormous condescension

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behind the African sympathies of many American liberals. Senator Edward Kennedy, echoed by a hundred letters-to-the-editor, advocates direct flights to Biafra, despite "petty political objections" like Nigerian complaints about her airspace. How would Kennedy regard Cuban relief flights to Mississippi? We have never taken our sovereignty lightly, but it seems that in Africa boundaries don't count. Beneath much humane energy lies the conviction that Africans can't take care of themselves.

Critics on the left like to describe Nigeria as a "colonial entity." They forget that Biafra is, too. The borders of the old Eastern Region were determined by the British for administrative reasons, and like Nigeria it is a multi-tribal area. The Ibos are the largest group, but other tribes account for about 40 percent of the population, and live on more than half the land. Almost all the oil lies in the Niger delta, outside Iboland. Before secession, the Ibo leadership initiated a system of provincial administration that gave the appearance of new power for minority areas. The minorities were unconvinced. For years, they had lobbied for separate regions of their own – a desire achieved three days *before* secession, when the country was divided into 12 states, two of them, Rivers and Southeast, in the non-Ibo east. To the minority tribes, Biafra looked like a grab for their oil and seaports, rather than the strike for freedom of a beleaguered people.

The Rivers and Southeast states are now under federal control; hostility to the Ibos is greater there than any place else in the country. Some Ibos have returned to the north, scene of the notorious 1966 massacres, but the minority areas they claimed as part of Biafra are bitterly against them. Rivers people spoke to me grimly about the Ibos, who they feel have dominated them for years. Before secession, the Ibos detained anyone who advocated a Rivers state. Afterwards was worse. Ibo troops were everywhere, knocking on doors late at night to check absences and to run down rumors of collaboration. Rivers men who fled to Lagos to join the federal army had their families killed or abducted by the Biafrans. Each time a town was lost to the federals, Biafran soldiers herded civilians back behind the lines, usually against their will (a point to remember when reflecting on the dreadful overcrowding of what remains of Biafra). Many Rivers people were killed long before the federals arrived, and the survivors truly feel "liberated." They fear nothing so much as being ruled once more by Ojukwu: there can be no putting Biafra together again.

"The Rivers state is here to stay," assert posters in Port Harcourt, the capital, which fell to federal commandos last May. The city is far from normal, with little electric power and no public transport. It is accessible only by sea and air (commercial flights have lately resumed), since the old road link passes over the damaged Onitsha bridge and through Biafran territory. There is a lot of destruction, especially at the oil refinery and along the main street, where the Biafrans burned down British stores and banks two weeks before leaving the city. But there are people, and a sense of life. An excellent administration has been installed, and the dream of the Rivers inhabitants to manage their own destiny seems suddenly credible. There are few Ibos, however, outside refugee camps – they once constituted 60 percent of the population, though the city is built on Rivers land. The kindest remark I heard about them was, "They may return, but not as masters." And even such a resettlement would be several years away.

The condition of Enugu, the old Eastern capital, spells the contrast between Ibo and minority townships under federal control. Captured long before Port Harcourt, this once hectic Ibo city remains nearly empty, a ghostly shell. Some civilians have drifted in, perhaps 5,000 in all, but many are Hausas from the north – the last residents to make a place congenial to Ibos. The local Ibo administrators, who opposed secession, are doing their best to evoke confidence in the federal government, but resistance is strong. The day I was there, late in January, three Ibos were publicly executed for sending a bomb to the army commander (it killed two soldiers who intercepted it).

Lagos officials are optimistic that, once free of Ojukwu's control, Ibos will return peacefully to the Federation. There is little doubt, however, that most Biafrans now believe that surrender means death, as Radio Biafra keeps telling them. Radio Biafra will say anything. It still signs itself "Enugu," more than a year after the fall of that city, contrives conversations with dead men to prove they are alive, and last year accused Britain of sending Nigeria a company of paratroops disguised as the Hibernian soccer team. It invents huge casualty tolls for the enemy and steady advances for the home side. While some federal brutalities (such as the recent market bombing at Umuohiagu) are sadly real, others, like the slaughter at Urua Inyang, which so shocked Canada, were pure fabrications fed to reporters by the Biafrans. But inside Biafra you believe what you are told; and prominent Ibos cannot comprehend that a number of their tribesmen have been living in Lagos and the Western Region throughout the war.

The Nigerian mood has become like Israel's: to hell with world opinion. If outsiders cherish myths of genocide and have never even heard of the Rivers and Southeast states, why bother with them? Touring US congressmen who spend twice as long in Biafra as in Lagos are regarded with contempt. "The war will end

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on the basis of One Nigeria," they insist in the federal capital; "no outside force can change that." Col. Ojukwu sounds equally determined; but he needs American arms and diplomatic support, as well as food. Despite wide public pressure and Mr. Nixon's sympathetic remarks, Washington is unlikely to become more deeply committed. After Vietnam, the last thing the Administration needs is immersion in a tribal war in West Africa.

Hard-Core Blacks And the Shiny Auto

Detroit

Employers (in Detroit, this invariably means The Big Three auto producers), unions (primarily the United Auto Workers), city officials and civil rights leaders are agonizing here over a problem that is of equal concern and importance in the Nixon Administration.

Having done a noteworthy job of hiring from the hard core (in 1968, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler took on 40,000 such workers, 32 percent of all those placed in the nationwide National Alliance of Businessmen project), Detroit is wondering how to preserve the jobs of these men, or at least some of their income, if there is a business turndown. Heavy layoffs of the hard core could undo the economic and social benefits achieved under the program. The automakers' hiring program, which has worked well even from an employment officer's viewpoint (that is, the hard core have proved they are willing to earn their keep and are as reliable and productive as other men on the assembly line), has helped ease the racial tensions that have gripped Detroit since the disastrous riots of mid-1967. "If these ghetto residents get the axe," says one black personnel official at Chrysler, "it would really be tough for industry to reestablish itself with any respect in the inner city. Layoffs would create a new kind of disillusionment."

Under corporate and union seniority rules, in a layoff it's generally "last in, first out." Most of the hard core were the last to be hired. Nobody would think about changing the basic formula, least of all Reuther's UAW, but alternatives have been quietly explored.

GM hasn't had to trim production, but Ford and Chrysler have, and they have minimized layoffs more than ever before. Plants are working four days a week instead of five; everybody makes slightly less money, but nobody gets the pink slip. In other cases, the last-in hard core have been shifted back to training programs, usually joint company - federal government expense affairs. A trainee doesn't make as much money but he still gets a weekly check. There's some indication that this training stopgap arrangement will be increased if production has to be further trimmed.

There are other cushions. Over the years, the UAW has won an amazing array of benefits to take up the shock of diminished business and therefore diminished employment. Any man becomes a UAW member after 30 days on the job; once a member, he can demand recall before any new person is taken on after business picks up. An auto worker with any length of service can command 95 percent of his normal daily pay if he unexpectedly is idled the fifth day in any one week. There is supplemental unemployment compensation, plus regular jobless pay, for men who have had six months' regular employment.

All this is fine, but Detroit knows the rub will come in any period of prolonged production cutback. In such case layoffs will be necessitated by economics, which no amount of altruism will circumvent. Most of those 40,000 hard core – the bulk of whom, of course, are black – would be back in the ghetto, with empty pockets but full of malice. This in Detroit.

But what if Detroit is multiplied by Cleveland, Chicago, Gary, Pittsburgh, Kansas City and Los Angeles? What if the bulk of those 85,000 hard-core persons placed under the National Alliance of Businessmen's program in 50 major cities are idled because of recession? Richard Rowan of the University of Pennsylvania, who has studied the Negro's work role in the steel industry, says that "given a severe recession the minority groups would be right back where they started from."

If this is only half true, it would explain why an unusual alliance of business, labor, politics and welfare defines President Nixon's chief domestic challenge as keeping America economically healthy.

Robert Dietsch

Spiro the Veep

by John Osborne

One of the nicer people at the Nixon White House is Mrs. Alice Fringer, Vice President Spiro T. Agnew's secretary. She has known him since he joined her late husband's Baltimore law firm 25 years ago, she has been his secretary since he began his public career seven years ago as the managing executive of Baltimore County, and she does not take any guff from him. The other day, in the White House office where Vice President Agnew is quartered at President Nixon's order, Mrs. Fringer asked Agnew how he likes the job. "Very much," he answered. She said that he could tell her the truth: did he *really* like it?

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"I'm telling you the truth," he replied. "I really do." Mrs. Fringer and the 12 other principal members of the Vice President's staff will like it better than they have up to now when he is freed, at least in part, from the elegant thralldom imposed upon him by the present White House arrangement. They reject the notion, popular with the press, that Nixon put Agnew in the West Wing of the White House, only three offices removed from the President's own Oval Room, more to keep him on a tight tether than to dignify the Vice Presidency. Their objection, grounded in observable fact, is that being there is more of a nuisance than a help to him and to his assistants. An ample office, complete with such amenities as a kitchenette and a dressing room, is being prepared for him in the Executive Office Building just across the way. When he moves into it, probably late this month, he will no longer be isolated as he has been from all of his staff except Mrs. Fringer. He is to retain the West Wing office, for such times as the President may feel a need to be near his Vice President. Judging by the experience of the first month, these occasions will be rare. If Nixon has summoned Agnew once for a private chat in the Oval Room, it has escaped notice. They meet regularly at Cabinet, NSC, Urban Affairs Council and similar sessions, and the Vice President has spoken with touching pleasure of a few evening engagements, formal and informal, at the Presidential mansion. But the President's necessary rationing of his time has not provided much, if any, of it for intimate converse with the Vice President.

This could and probably will be misinterpreted. Nixon was a Vice President for eight years, he has studied the history of his office with the greatest care, and he may be assumed to have absorbed the lesson that Harry Truman set forth in his memoirs after he left the Presidency. The lesson is that Presidents and Vice Presidents are happy together only when they are not too much together. Old hands at the White House have watched Eisenhower, then John Kennedy, and then Lyndon Johnson, undertake to share their Presidencies to the fullest with their Vice Presidents and discover, the hard way for both parties, that Presidents simply do not have the time and energy to spare for frequent personal involvement with a subordinate who is, however strenuous the effort to inflate his job, fundamentally superfluous until that moment when he may suddenly be essential. The end result, particularly painful in the recent cases of Vice Presidents Johnson and Hubert Humphrey, has been frustration, hidden bitterness, and public embarrassment for both men. Under Nixon, the outward inflation continues with announcements that Agnew is to preside at Cabinet, NSC, Cabinet committee, and Urban Council meetings when the President is absent and, in the latest example, to head a new Office of Inter-Governmental Relations, concerned with the federal interests of state, city and county governments. But President Nixon, who prefers written communication with his own assistants and avoids personal contact with them whenever possible, has neither undertaken publicly nor acted privately to buddy up with his Vice President.

At meetings in the Cabinet Room, Nixon and Agnew sit opposite each other at the center of the Cabinet table, with the ranking department Secretaries present to the right and left of the President. When Agnew entered the Cabinet Room on a recent Saturday, to preside over the Council on Urban Affairs in Nixon's absence, someone suggested that he take the President's chair. "Oh, no," he said, "that's for the President," and he proceeded to conduct the meeting from his usual place. He did it with ease and competence, according to Nixon assistants who were present. As a participant, under the President's eye, he is said to give every evidence of confidence and of familiarity with the business at hand. "He certainly does his share of talking," a White House assistant who has observed him at meetings says. "I get the impression," says another, "that he is quite a quick study."

A Vice President's sole constitutional duty is to preside over the Senate. Agnew, the first Vice President since 1945 who has not been a Senator, probably would be reasonably content if this were his only mandatory duty. He tries to reserve at least three hours of his crowded days for opening each Senate session, building up friendships with Senators of both parties, and mastering the Senate's rules and customs. His Capitol Hill mentors are Senator Everett M. Dirksen, the Minority Leader, and Walter Mote, who represented the Republican minority on the Senate Rules Committee staff for eleven years and was recommended to Agnew by Bryce Harlow, the President's assistant for Congressional affairs, who had intended to hire Mote for his own staff. His legislative assistant, stationed with Mote on Capitol Hill, is Frank De Costa, a young Negro attorney from Baltimore, who was Agnew's civil-rights adviser in the two years when he was governor of Maryland. De Costa disclaims any special concern with minority matters in Washington and refers inquiries on that subject to Herbert Thompson, Agnew's press assistant.

De Costa and Thompson are among the nine assistants, including Mrs. Fringer, who worked for Agnew when he was governor and accompanied him to Washington. Their chief and Agnew's senior assistant is C. Stanley Blair, who was Maryland's Secretary of State and, in effect, a lieutenant governor without the right of succession during Agnew's abbreviated term. Only three of Agnew's assistants knew much more about Washington than he did as of January 20. They are Walter Mote; Kent Crane, a young Foreign Service man on loan from the State Department; and C. D. Ward, a Washington attorney who had been

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general counsel for the National Association of Counties and will have a lot to do with the Office of Inter-Governmental Relations. The newcomers, like their boss, give an impression of earnest effort to learn.

What about the Vice President? He appears to be increasingly at ease with himself, his President and his difficult job, in a guarded sort of way. Agnew and Nixon have an understanding that the Vice President in his speeches and at his rare press conferences will confine himself either to orthodox generalities or to the particulars of his assigned concerns. He displays a rather appealing awareness of the handicaps that he brought upon himself with his awkward performance during the 1968 campaign and especially of his low standing – even lower than the President's – with black Americans. In the only interview he granted during his first four weeks in office, he told Jack Germond of the Gannett Newspapers that "I don't see any use of my protesting any more that it's all wrong, that they had me pegged wrong. I couldn't possibly convince them of that by just saying it." He expects, he says, to spend more time on federal efforts to improve the lot of the black poor than on anything else and his close attention to the work and problems of the Urban Council suggests that this is so.

Watching Vice President Agnew in his few appearances to date in President Nixon's company makes for an odd impression. A stranger to the United States and to them would suppose that Agnew with his straight stance, his pomaded greying hair, his look of restrained dignity and self-possession was the President being nice to the man who, at any moment and for better or worse, might be the next President.

How To Wink at China

by James C. Thomson, Jr.

The other day I asked a friend in the State Department if he thought any harm would be done by a speculative piece on the Sino-American conversations in Warsaw, which were to have been revived last month for the 135th time. "If you enjoy writing science fiction," he replied, "keep writing it."

My friend, a China specialist, may be a realist or just depressed; and I, rejuvenated by separation from Washington, may be deluded. Peking, from January 20th, had indeed excoriated Richard Nixon; the glimmer of promise in China's proposal for a renewed Warsaw contact had had no sequel – despite some hopeful scurryings by American would-be bridge-builders. And the glimmer itself has vanished with Peking's cancellation of the February session.

Yet one of these days or years it will happen, and it could even happen at Warsaw: an American official will say something that registers on the Chinese, and if we listen carefully there will be an eventual response. It will not, of course, happen soon if our man in Warsaw follows the recent lead of his President. Mr. Nixon, who should know better, fumbled his first press query on China (press conference #1, question #3) by tying his own hands, albeit temporarily, on Peking's admission to the UN – an issue on which no Administration has to take a public position till the autumn, which is a long way off; he also said we were waiting to see if Peking showed "any changes of attitude" at Warsaw (i.e., was ready to shape up).

Waiting for Peking to shape up is a waste of precious time – time that could be used in conversational initiatives (not to mention the laundry-list of unilateral substantive initiatives on travel, trade, disarmament, UN representation and the like, which for a decade China experts inside and outside the government have urged on three Administrations). To wait for Peking to shape up is also plain insulting: it assumes that all iniquity lies with the Chinese.

Why wait so grimly for the other man to blink? Why not try winking at him?

How to wink – that is the question. Or, to put it more precisely, what to say that we haven't said before? The question was pertinent for this month's canceled Warsaw meeting; it remains pertinent for all future contacts.

By casual calculation, there are several subjects about which we could and should make some useful noises in conversations with the Chinese: contacts, exchanges and trade; a Vietnam settlement, Soviet-American relations and Taiwan.

On some of these – contacts, for instance – we have undoubtedly made overtures to no avail in recent years. On others – Soviet-American relations and Vietnam negotiations – we must eventually seek to give the Chinese some candid reassurances, i.e., that Washington and Moscow are not about to gang up on them and that China's eventual participation in a Southeast Asian settlement, perhaps through a reconvened Geneva Conference, will be welcomed. The Chinese have good grounds for suspicion on both points, so this will be no easy task. (Simultaneously, of course, we must reassure the Russians that we are not conspiring with the Chinese – also, surprisingly, a difficult task but a manageable one.)

But such apparently formidable problems are as nothing compared to the central and crucial subject of Taiwan.

Most analyses of the Sino-American deadlock begin and end with Taiwan. This is where the Warsaw talks have left us, after 14 years and 134 sessions. No progress can be expected on any other issues, the Chinese tell us, until this one is resolved.

There it sits, the paramount obstacle to progress –

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symbol of a bifurcated revolution and an unfinished civil war. Peking insists on an end to US "occupation" of the island; Washington stands firm on our legal and moral commitments. The issue is clearly nonnegotiable. Or is it?

Peking knows we have the power and the will (and, so far, the constituency on Taiwan) to deny the island to conquest by the mainland. But Peking doesn't know what we intend to do beyond denial – and that is distinctly worrisome. Support the aging Nationalist forces in an invasion of the mainland? Even Mr. Dulles recovered from this pipe dream; his successors have been careful to avoid any such commitment, and one hopes that Peking has taken note. Or perhaps we intend to make the island a US storehouse of offensive weaponry directed against the mainland? That is not now the case, nor should we let it become so.

But rather than mainland recovery, perhaps we seek the permanent separation of Taiwan from China – an independent Taiwan? If so, Peking has grounds for apprehension; for Taiwan, as every Chinese knows (on both sides of the Straits) is a province of China. A permanently separated Taiwan is a major irredentist grievance that will poison East Asian relationships far into the future. Such seeds of long-term conflict should not be sown.

Fortunately, there *are* possible half-way points between reunion by force and permanent separation. One such point might be some interim formula of *de facto* accommodation between Taiwan and the mainland, while preserving the status quo: for instance, tacit mutual acknowledgment of Peking's residual sovereignty over Taiwan; tacit mutual acknowledgment of Taiwan's full autonomy; and, ideally, two Chinese votes to be cast in the UN General Assembly, with Peking seated in the Security Council (the obviously inexact analogy being the two votes assigned to Syria and Egypt both before and after their period of federation) – these arrangements to prevail until time and mortality on both sides of the Straits (10 years? 75 years?) make a closer accommodation and altered structure palatable to both parties. At best such a formula could evolve only slowly and quietly – and would undoubtedly require the passing from the scene of both Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung.

But even without Chiang and Mao, would either Peking or Taipei buy such a formula?

Taipei, of course, will be unhappy; it falls far short of the reconquest for which mainlanders yearn, the independence to which some Formosans aspire. Yet most Chinese Nationalists and even some Formosans are committed to – or acquiescent in – the nondivisibility of China, which the formula preserves.

As for Peking's reaction: if, as one is told, the Chinese are most deeply concerned about the permanent detachment of Taiwan, reassurance on this point can be extremely important – even an ice-breaker.

Hence the importance of Warsaw, not as a place to lay out any explicit formula – this or another – but as a place to take the first small step. That first step is a clarification of the US position on the status of Taiwan. We have heretofore said – since the peace treaty with Japan – that Taiwan's status in international law is yet to be determined. We should now say that Taiwan is, *de facto*, a part of China and that we expect it to remain under Chinese sovereignty; that we are determined to prevent the use of force by either Chinese claimant in the achievement of a Taiwan settlement; that Taiwan's political future is for Chinese on both sides of the Straits, not Americans, to decide; and that we meanwhile urge that Washington and Peking seek communication and understanding on a wide range of other issues – including "peaceful coexistence."

Such an initiative will not remove the Taiwan roadblock, but it could conceivably ease our way around that roadblock. It will be a far better test of Chinese intentions than the friendly but essentially empty rhetoric of the past three years – Mr. Johnson on "reconciliation" with Peking, Mr. Humphrey on the "building of bridges," Mr. Katzenbach on the possibility of trade with mainland China.

Despite the Warsaw cancellation, China may well be concerned in the months ahead about exclusion from an evolving Vietnam settlement. China may well be apprehensive of Soviet-American detente. China may well sense increasing isolation from the Moscow-oriented Communist community of nations. And all this may point – in the minds of some Peking strategists – to the desirability of a Sino-American thaw.

We should be sensitive to all these considerations. China is the key to a viable peace in Asia, and peace in Asia is what we need. Our China policy should therefore be attuned to our national interests – a policy made in Washington, certainly not in Moscow, Taipei or somewhere else.

But Taiwan is the crux of the problem. And here the first move is up to us, not Peking. It is a small move, more symbol than substance, more a wink than a deal. But it hints at a deal.

The alternative is grim Ruskean inaction, no-change-till-the-other-side-changes. One is, of course, relieved by the knowledge that if Washington were to recognize Peking tomorrow, the State Department would assure us that "this step involves no change in our policy." Fiction, if not science fiction, is often the handmaiden of diplomacy. Nevertheless, inaction would be not merely unworthy of a great power and a fresh Administration; it would be yet another opportunity lost in the long and tragic record of Sino-American conflict.

MR. THOMSON, *a former White House adviser, now teaches history at Harvard.*

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Matthew Morgenthau's Complaint

Fort Polk, Louisiana

Matthew Morgenthau is the son of Hans J. Morgenthau, the professor of political science at the University of Chicago and academic critic of the Vietnam war. Last November, just weeks before his twenty-sixth birthday and effective immunity from conscription, Morgenthau was drafted. He had been a card-carrying member of the ACLU and an OEO union organizer, but despite his liberal leanings and the politics of his father he submitted to the draft out of what he considered a sense of duty. It was personally as well as politically the wrong thing for him to do since, as it became quickly clear at Fort Polk, Louisiana (located very near the end of the earth), Morgenthau was not army material. He wasn't atypical at Brandeis, where he spent part of his college years or in law school, but he was unusual at Fort Polk. Much older than the average trainee, he was psychologically fragile, he had bad feet, which needed corrective shoes the army doesn't supply, and he was rather uncoordinated. His shoes didn't fit; his army clothes didn't fit; nothing fit. The psychiatrist he consulted before he went into the service could have told the army that, but Morgenthau wasn't interested in exploiting his potential outs because, for reasons of his own, he wanted to submit to the draft.

As inevitable goes, it was inevitable that Morgenthau would become the goat of his platoon. He couldn't do the required push-ups; when he marched his feet became swollen; and it was difficult for him, malingering not at all, to do the things the army required. His sergeant, Peter Laemers, a German-born Catholic, had learned that he was Jewish, and at those times when Matthew straggled and dragged and slumped, the sergeant acted as if he thought there was some connection between what Morgenthau was (a Jew) and how he performed (badly). Matthew's wife, Linda, recalls that one day at the rifle range "three drill sergeants were betting on his hitting the target. Two bet against him and one bet for him. He said they were all trying to help him however. Laemers came along and said they were wasting their time and money because he couldn't do it and that Matt was queer anyway. He then asked Matt if he had any balls. I got the impression that this remark was typical."

Morgenthau was not exactly delighted with the army or with Fort Polk, which is fifty miles from human society, a place where 23,000 trainees with Vietnam in their futures are marooned with nothing to do but take orders and kill poisonous snakes. But he made the attempt and did his exercises to improve his shape even when he was home on leave.

Except for his famous father Morgenthau is perfectly typical of college-graduate draftees who are not in the best physical condition and who do the military no particular good. He is probably typical also of many of the soldiers who get into trouble with the army because at some point they can no longer take the strain.

On January 10, Morgenthau "committed the crime" for which he was court-martialed here February 13. His wife, who went to Louisiana to see him soon after the incident, summarized what happened in a letter to her father-in-law: "He came back from a long day which included a double-time march to the rifle range and a rapid march back. When they get back they usually take the last half of the marchers (the slower ones) and make them crawl around a dirt pit on their hands and knees. Matt didn't want to have to do this and tried to hurry up. His sergeant, Laemers, came and asked him to do push-ups. He slumped on his stomach instead of being straight and stiff because he was exhausted. Laemers ordered him to straighten up and Matt said 'Fuck you.' Laemers shouted at him to get on his feet. When Matt got up he said that Laemers had his fists clenched and held a little out in front of him. Matt thought that he was coming at him and swung first. Matt said that then something snapped and he kept hitting him. Then Lt. [Dillard L.] Shiflett came along and ordered him into his office. He asked Matt if he wanted to fight him too. Matt accepted and Shiflett took his shirt off. At this point I am unsure of what Matt said. I think he said that Shiflett handed his shirt to someone and they went outside, but I'm not sure. Matt hit him first. By the time the higher officer (I think it was Lt. James Pashley) came along Shiflett was on top of Matt. The officer ordered Shiflett off of Matt and to stop fighting. Shiflett ignored the order."

Reconstructions of the incident vary. According to one, the sergeant kicked or nudged Morgenthau when

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he was slumped on the ground unable to push-up, and Morgenthau believing he had been assaulted, reacted in berserk self-defense. According to another, Morgenthau bit Lt. Shiflett, called Pashley "a sorry mother-fucker" and screamed "This is worse than Hitler's army." When it was all over nobody was seriously hurt and Morgenthau was carted off to the stockade to be held incommunicado for four days.

No one denies the incident happened, that Morgenthau momentarily lost control of his senses or that he yelled obscenities. But the issue of provocation was never cleared up. Morgenthau himself believes that all his troubles were rooted in his religion, his liberal politics, and his father, and that because of them he was singled out for special and intolerable abuse. This belief made him pious about his part in the incident and eager to win the army's official vindication.

But there's little of that to be found in a special court-martial, a proceeding which in Morgenthau's case resembled a high school play in which everyone reads his lines badly and without conviction. The accuser – the army – is judge and jury, and the defense, no matter how skillful its arguments has little chance of winning a point.

The Morgenthau case was handled in a special manner, his lawyers believe, because Morgenthau is his father's son. Richard V. Burnes, the Alexandria, Louisiana, attorney Morgenthau retained, has handled other minor cases of this sort at Polk and is confident that a settlement short of court-martial could have been reached had Morgenthau not been of such stock. Col. Kenneth G. Groom, the convening authority, who certified the eleven charges (later reduced to five), who selected the court-martial panel from among men in his own command, and who ultimately had power to approve a settlement of the case, bragged to Burnes that he had once resisted the "influence" of Hubert Humphrey when the Vice President's name was invoked by a soldier seeking special treatment. Groom implied that, if anything, Morgenthau's position would only result in extrazealous prosecution. Groom decided on a special court-martial (maximum possible sentence six months), and had Matthew confined to the stockade to await trial – an unusual procedure to say the least since such confinement, Groom confided, is customarily limited to persons accused of capital crimes, to deserters thought likely to desert again, and to men considered a positive menace to their fellows.

Burnes, a serious and talented young attorney, who moved to Alexandria last year after playing assistant D. A. to Jim Garrison's lead in New Orleans, came to Polk high mindedly prepared to argue the United States Constitution, but he knew that the effort was pointless.

The charges against Morgenthau boiled down to three: striking a superior, disobeying a command and disrespect. The special court martial panel had eight members (usually there are five), all of them men of rank equivalent to or higher than Morgenthau's accusers. None were trainees; it was not, strictly speaking, a jury of Morgenthau's peers.

The proceedings were rote and at times ludicrous. The ranking officer, Captain Harry R. Peterson, who was president of the court continually "moved" when he should have "ruled," and seemed to have only the vaguest notion of what was going on. He appeared completely deaf to the defense, taking all of his cues and instructions as to the law of the case from the prosecutor (known in such proceedings as trial counsel). Peterson rejected the motion that the composition of the panel include any of 23,000 available trainees, rejected a motion that the verdict be unanimous as in trials by jury guaranteed by the Constitution, rejected the motion that the president of the court be a judge or licensed attorney (a motion, in other words, to declare himself unconstitutional!), refused to disclose whether in fact any member of the court was a lawyer (even though there was no objection to this from the trial counsel), refused to grant separate trials on the individual charges, refused to employ a court reporter to make an official transcript (because it was said there were no stenotypists available despite affidavits Burnes had from three court reporters stating that they *were* available).

In the end there really was no trial because the trial counsel, feeling personally that Morgenthau deserved leniency, was willing to make a deal with the defense attorney, Burnes. The chief prosecution witness was about to get married and the trial conflicted with his wedding reception. Other witnesses were in a graduating class of trainees and didn't want to miss the ceremonies or shipping out. And Captain Antonio Rodriquez, another of Morgenthau's lawyers, had his mother visiting from Puerto Rico. No one was much in a mood for the trial and a conspiracy of defense and prosecution lawyers convinced Col. Groom that he should not let his penchant for going after soldiers with influential friends and relatives stand in the way of justice. Only Morgenthau himself, who badly wanted his day in court, had to be convinced that the best thing to do was to sign a paper agreeing to a guilty plea on the condition that he get a maximum of three months in the stockade suspended. (The board voted a six-month's sentence anyway, but Col. Groom's word was *their* bond and the three-month's suspended sentence prevailed.) The army has agreed to assign Morgenthau to a new company and give him a fresh start, and he is eager for it, but there remains a question in the minds of his friends whether it would not be better for Morgenthau and the army to agree amicably to a separation.

David Sanford

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A Problem for the Church

Priests Who Live in Sin

by Colman McCarthy

The Gallagher President's Report, a confidential letter to chief executives of America's corporations and businesses, recently surveyed what it called "an untapped manpower resource – former Roman Catholic priests." Although no exact statistics are available from the Vatican, a private research report circulated within the Curia estimated that between 15 and 20 percent of priests ordained as of 1964 had quit and were "living in sin" outside the Church. In the US, one clerical organization keeping count said that in 1968, Catholic priests resigned at the rate of 51 a month – a 31 percent increase over 1967. Another reliable estimate says that more than 1,000 American priests have left the ministry since Vatican II.

The Gallagher survey of 231 former priests revealed that 78.3 percent are now employed; 71.6 percent are happy with their present employment; their average salary is $9,200, and average age 38; they've had 11 years in the priesthood; and 49.4 percent now hold jobs in business, 27.3 percent in education, 13.6 percent in social work, and 6.8 percent in government.

The business community is generally delighted with this exodus. Since 45.9 percent in the Gallagher survey hold master's degrees and 32 percent have experience in financial administration, an ex-priest is often a rare find. Only 5.7 percent of those firms hiring them were "fearful of their past." Among government officials, Sargent Shriver was always on the lookout for ex-priests to work in the anti-poverty program. He once quipped that so many were working for him that OEO really stood for the Office of Ecclesiastical Outcasts.

As to why so many intelligent and talented men are steadily renouncing solemn and life-long commitments to the priesthood, 73.2 percent listed enforced celibacy as the major reason, with 63.3 percent citing "the irrelevancy of church work" as a second reason.

Ordinarily, an institution such as the Catholic Church in America, already understaffed with only 36,000 diocesan priests for 47 million adherents, would have a severe case of the shakes over such a personnel drain. But what seems to be shaking most right now within American Catholicism are the fingers of many bishops in their attempts at disciplining activist priests; and horrified middle-way Catholics who are shaking a leg to get back to Pius XII religiosity. Meanwhile, the causes for priestly desertion – celibacy and irrelevancy – refuse to stay under the rectory rug.

In the matter of celibacy, the question is not even being discussed by the official Church. Many had hoped that since the fathers of Vatican II had produced what was for them an enlightened statement on marriage – it is no longer an outlet for the weak or oversexed, they said, but can be a means for a deep spiritual relationship between a man and woman – they would also see that the time had come for a married clergy. No. Pope Paul said the issue was too sensitive for open discussion on the floor of St. Peter's, that he would soon issue an encyclical. In June 1967, he did – reaffirming the tradition and necessity of clerical celibacy in the Latin rite. Since then, the American hierarchy has obediently toed the papal line, and then some. When Notre Dame University refused Cardinal Francis McIntyre's demand that a conference on celibacy be barred from the campus a year and a half ago, the cardinal got even by withdrawing support of the school's fund-raising drive in California. Occasionally, a bishop who knows his way around the in-baskets of the Curia will successfully petition Rome on behalf of a priest wanting to marry. But more typical is the story told by married priest Robert Francouer in a recent essay. A young priest seeking a dispensation from celibacy went to the chancery to see his bishop. While waiting in the reception room, others passed in and out. "The bishop isn't in," he was told. "These people are only seeing the chancellor." Finally, after some time, the bishop appeared. "Why don't you just go away?" he asked. "Why do you insist on pestering me for permission to marry? Just go ahead and break the law. Then we'll see what can be done to straighten out the mess."

The present mess of celibacy is the Church's own making. It happens, first, because no one has ever formulated a theology of sex – on the Church's long-held view that since making love is solely and always a procreative activity of the body, not the soul also, how can one get up a theology on it? The second reason is because the Church refuses to see that sexuality is a matter of conscience, not supervision. Thus, pope after pope, in order to steer the clergy clear of bedroom weakness, plus the supposed guilt and shame of it all, has made celibacy an ideal not merely to be pro-

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posed but to be imposed. Never mind that neither Jesus, the apostles nor Paul commanded the ministers of the word to be unmarried. Never mind, either, that the call to the priesthood and the call to celibacy are basically apples and oranges, distinct and uncoinciding.

What this means, taken from the abstract, is that often when a young man steps forward to be ordained he accepts both the priesthood and celibacy consciously, while subconsciously rejecting celibacy. He might hate it, in fact, but because he wants the priesthood, will attempt to endure celibacy for life. So he goes ahead, and gets ordained. A few years later, when he is more aware of his own sexual needs and rights, he realizes the psychological prison he has sentenced himself to. It can be safely said that few Catholic priests decisively embrace celibacy in itself. Instead, they accept it as part of the package, like fat on the steak. Many learn too late that unless a person is absolutely sold on the idea of celibacy and would live as a bachelor regardless of his life's work, he is self-deceiving to become a priest.

This self-deception is widespread even in Catholic seminaries. Among the Church's 47,000 US seminarians, a large number are presently dating, even though it is forbidden. They reason: "Since the celibacy rule is only a rule and may be changing in my lifetime, there's no real harm in my dating now. In fact, maybe I had better start going out with girls so I'll be able to make a wise choice when I can marry."

Although seminarian dating is often not a sign of immaturity but a try at overcoming it – on the D. H. Lawrence idea that "love has to be learned" – the seminary is a pitiful place to operate from. Forced to be sneaks, at one turn, there is little in the average seminary to draw out the sexual feelings of a 25-, 26- or 27-year-old about to commit himself to celibacy. After going through the seminary, some young men are about as capable of making a lifetime decision to celibacy at age 25 as they would be at 10. With the Church producing all these 10-year-old 25-year-olds, it is no surprise that 73.2 percent of the Gallagher ex-priests quit over celibacy.

Why do so many men in the priesthood five, ten, twenty years suddenly decide to get married? Simply because they are making a decision now they should have made years ago in the seminary – when they could have cleared out with no bother or guilt. Now they must invariably scrape before a bishop, often wait years for Rome to act – even then, on the fairly long shot that it will act favorably – marry on the sly and face the contempt of Aunt Clare who remembers the words of ordination: "Thou art a priest forever."

The fact that celibacy is such a burning issue in Catholicism is one reason why priests are quitting because of irrelevance. They see a nation and world plagued by incredible suffering among the poor and incredible arrogance among the rich, and ask: what is the Church doing about all this? Arguing celibacy, that's what. Fr. Philip Berrigan, imprisoned for six years last fall for destroying draft records, recently wrote about himself and other activist priests: "We have little time for issues that matter only within the Church – birth control, clerical celibacy, divorce, etc. For decades, these have been decided by the consciences of men. We do have time, however, for people victimized by indiscriminate power." In many ways, priests and ex-priests who think like Berrigan are beginning to realize the futility of working within the Church against indiscriminate power – because the Church, and much of its membership, is a vital part of that power. When Cardinal Spellman went beyond even the generals and made his famous "my country, right or wrong" statement on a visit to Vietnam, what Catholic corporation man whose company was making money from the war could not feel justified? Or when Archbishop Robert E. Lucey publicly supported Lyndon Johnson's war escalation, what Catholic general in the Pentagon could not sleep with an easier conscience? Or when Archbishop Cody in the summer of 1966 asked Martin Luther King and his Negroes to stop marching "because of the evil-doing of others," what evil rock- and bottle-throwers in the Catholic parishes of Cicero could not feel the prelate was on their side?

The power of the American Church is seen clearly enough as it sides with the government on the war and edgy white America on race. This has been known for some time. Where the indiscriminate power is less obvious, but perhaps more felt, is in the marketplace – where the great sludge of commercialism is sweeping along the country in a giant wave of cleverly produced, distributed and consumed trash. Responsible for much of this are the Catholic liars among the countless secular liars – the men who head or run the corporations and ad agencies that help boost the economy by producing, selling and advertising all the fake items that the innocent and gullible largely take as the "essentials" of life. These are the men of power in America; and the official Church, instead of being locked in a bitter struggle against them, usually goes out of its way to embrace them. The money-changers in America are different from the ones in Jerusalem driven out by Jesus: here, they either give the Church a kickback on the profits or else they own the temple outright, so the priests can't drive them out.

Since the Church is irrelevant in the struggle against the conspiracy and buy-off of power, the main question remaining concerns the effectiveness of the priests who quit on that issue.

Two groups are prominent. First, the ex-priests typi-

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fied by Thomas Melville, a former missionary in Guatemala, now married to an ex-nun, both of whom achieved notoriety last year in the Catonsville, Md., group that burned the draft records. Melville, and the other ex-priests of the peace and anti-war movements are usually heroic, courageous and loving men. But in their efforts to bring the Church and the Government to their senses, they generally go in big for personal witness, the stand-up-and-be-counted posture. However effective it might be in prophetic terms, where blood, fire and noise are important, their acts have not yet led to solutions that work, but only expressions of how bad they feel. Burning draft records, with its emphasis on willingness to take the consequences, more clearly expresses a crucifixion mentality than anything else. "Must then," asked Shaw in his epilogue to *St. Joan*, "a Christ perish in torment in every age, to save those who have no imagination?" One answer is, no, one Christ crucified is enough; his act redeemed all men with plenty to spare. The Melville kind of ex-priest communicates clearly his disdain and despair of the American government and Catholic Church – but since he is listened to mostly by those who already share that view, he does little to bring on social improvement. Standing before the crazy mobs, getting creased over the skull by cops or sentenced to prison is great for the history books and martyrologies; but since Melville-style ex-priests have little money or technology behind them – primary requirements if the modern exercise of compassion is to be globally fruitful – they seem to be just another gang of radicals without a plan.

The second group who left the Church over irrelevancy appear willing to take their 11-year loss and forget the whole thing. Only one in two of the Gallagher ex-priests consider themselves practicing Catholics; and only one in four believes the Church is "a force for good." Since half of the ex-priests are already married and nearly all of the still-singles eventually plan the step, it seems they are more concerned about making their marriage and careers relevant than the Church. They are starting all over again, walking over what Marx called "the human ground of Christianity." To many observers, this is the new direction many with religious instincts will be taking. The supernatural, basic to Catholicism, is now seen as a luxury item in the face of all the *natural* suffering that is just as mysterious as the Trinity or the Transubstantiation. This is not to overlook the many energetic priests who have not left the Church and still hold out hope. But they are often 11th hour men, necessarily concerned more with how the Church will survive than how it will serve.

"My parish is bored stiff," wrote Bernanos' country priest, "no other word for it. Like so many others! We can see them being eaten up by boredom, and we can't do anything about it." The boredom in the parishes is still here, but now something *can* be done, provided one doesn't think so with arrogance. To the men who sincerely want it, sanctity can now be found in other places besides rectories, the Kingdom can be won by other virtues than obedience to the chancery, love of God can be shown in supplying men with other necessities than sacraments. Even with a wife and kids, on $9,200 a year.

The Life of Ivan Illich

by Dan Dolan

Until Ivan Illich came to Cuernavaca in 1961, the revolutionary traditions of that Mexican town seemed to have died the day Emiliano Zapata rode into fatal ambush in 1919. Today, Msgr. Illich and the Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC) of which he is the founder have again enlivened the sleepy town of rich North Americans, and old men who rode with Zapata. Pope Paul last week again rebuffed Illich. In mid-January, a Vatican order forbade any priests or members of religious communities from studying at the Center. The ban's implications may go considerably beyond Cuernavaca. It may mark the beginning of an attempt by the conservative forces now in the ascent politically to dampen the revolutionary-tinged efforts of the Catholic left in Latin America.

Because, according to Rome, "curiosity, bewilderment and scandal" were generated by social and religious radicals who had been affiliated with the Center,

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Msgr. Illich, a 42-year-old priest of the Archdiocese of New York, was summoned to the Vatican last June for interrogation about the Center's activities. At this inquisition, reminiscent of the Inquisition or a command performance before the League of Soviet Writers, Illich refused to take an oath of secrecy and insisted that the charges and rules of procedure governing the investigation be made available to him. When these requests were denied, he refused to participate in the interrogation, except to affirm his doctrinal orthodoxy.

Later, a partial version of the "charges" – a set of 85 questions – was presented to him. The questions, hostile, naïve and ambiguous, ranged from asking Illich whether he wished that women would go to confession without a grill in the confessional, to whether he had any part in kidnapping the Archbishop of Guatemala. In form and substance they seemed the product of an Inquisitorial mentality lingering in some dark sub-basement of the Vatican – where Illich's interview, in fact, took place. Indeed, his judge and prosecutor, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, is the direct descendant of the Holy Office.

Among the questions were such generalized demands for self-abasement as, "Is it true that from 1960 on . . . there has taken place in you a dangerous development of new ideas with disruptive humanitarian and libertarian tendencies . . .?" Other pleonastic polemics in the guise of questions included, "What can you answer to someone who speaks of you as 'restless, adventurous, imprudent, fanatical, hypnotizing, rebellious to all authority, and disposed to accept and acknowledge only that of the Bishop of Cuernavaca?' "

Illich's response to the inquiry has been an appeal to the Pope; a letter to Cardinal Seper, head of the Congregation; a self-imposed moratorium on his functioning as a priest, and public silence – until Rome's imposition of the ban in mid-January. The ban was appealed to the Pope.

CIDOC is an educational institution, founded in 1961 with financial assistance of US Catholic bishops. Its primary function has been to teach Spanish and to provide a cultural orientation to US clerical missionaries and lay volunteers before their tours of duty in Latin America. In addition to its training function, the Center, a Mexican nondenominational institution of which Illich is one of five board members, has an active research and publications effort. It focuses on socio-cultural problems resulting from the destruction of traditional cultures by the modernizing world. Illich's controversial assessment of the role of the Church has made the Center widely known.

Associates of the Center have increasingly been social and political radicals who find Illich's "freethinkery" congenial. In Illich's words, these ideas have exposed the students at the Center to "the truth that puts their faith to the test" which has, predictably enough, shaken those certainties based solely on ethnocentrism. Illich's blunt statements about "the seamy side of charity," for example, have pointed at the negative results of infusions of US money, ideas and men into the Latin American scene. He has called on the missionaries to acknowledge that they "fulfill the traditional role of the colonial power's lackey chaplain."

Tall and gaunt, like Ichabod Crane in a serape, Illich *applauds* the Papal insistence on clerical celibacy – because it "helps assure the speedy death of the clergy." In the area of social problems, he exhorts churchmen to "follow the example of the Pope" by making "statements so ephemeral that they could never be construed as being the Church's teaching."

The criticism of the Church structures that emanates from CIDOC derives from a theological conception, the Christian celebration of the experience of change. To celebrate the world, the Church must renounce the power, *qua* institution, to shape it, and must be willing for power to pass into secular hands – a modern rendering unto Caesar. According to the logic of this view, it is fitting that a consciously secular ideology assume the task of solving social problems. This renunciation of secular power would mean a depoliticization of the Church in which the Chilean Christian Democrats would be scorned as much as the Columbian Conservatives.

Yet removal of the Church from politics is in itself a political act, with system-shattering potential. To those who live in dread of revolution, it is foolish if not malicious. It is widely assumed that the major cause of CIDOC's present troubles is its threat to the *de facto* coincidence of interests between the Latin American Church hierarchy and the oligarchies, both of which may have put pressure on the Vatican. Illich is surely not unaware of the political effect of his position, but he argues that "it is blasphemous to use the gospel to prop up any social or political system." Though his proposals have political implications, these are seen as the concern of man in his political aspect, while in the religious aspect Illich simply declares, confident in his theological orthodoxy that faith is a gift of God: "I want to celebrate my faith for no purpose at all."

But in Latin America today, the religious and political tenor of the times opposes institutions like CIDOC. The Pope in Columbia emphasized moderation, not innovation; the *golpistas* look with a cold eye on Illichs. Illich says, "I will survive it with full sails." But tragedy is implicit in the situation, and many will not dare as he does.

MR. DOLAN, *a teaching fellow at the University of Pennsylvania, recently returned from CIDOC.*

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Stanley Kauffmann on films

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie

20th Century-Fox

Bezhin Meadow

Artkino

No one who admires Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* can be greatly enthusiastic about Jay Presson Allen's two versions. The best one can do is recognize with a sigh that, as usual, "adaptation" means settling for less. Mrs. Allen's stage version made a wispy attempt to keep the perspectives of the novel; her film version does not. The novel is framed in retrospect. The form is not so obvious as flashback; rather, two planes of time are kept alive – the fate of the women who were once Miss Brodie's pet students and the schooldays that to some extent made that fate. The viewpoint is the author's, the tone is irony, and it's essential to the irony that Miss Brodie never be quite sure which one of her girls betrayed her.

Here the form is all tidied up. Mrs. Allen has taken Mrs. Spark's troublesome time-weavings and straightened them out with carpenter's commonsense. Frank Kermode has said:

> "The suggestion is, in Mrs. Spark's novels, that a genuine relation exists between the forms of fiction and the forms of the world, between the novelist's creation and God's."

Nonsense, says Mrs. Allen (in effect). A story is a story, and if Mrs. Spark wants to embroider it for book-readers, even if the form is itself the work's resolution, she can't be allowed to fool around with film audiences. Fat parts are fat parts, scenes are scenes. The pieces must be assembled, traditionally piled up, and capped with a pay-off scene, in which the betrayer tells Miss Brodie of the betrayal and why.

The pity in all this is pertinent, not academic; the form of Mrs. Spark's novel, followed with faithful intention, would have made much better use of the film medium than this rather hack job and would have produced a more subtle and affecting result. This picture has no center; it bears down so heavily on schoolgirlish activities that what Mrs. Spark used for texture becomes somewhat cute.

Still there is some charm. First is the appeal of novelty. Edinburgh and a girls' school in 1932 are not run-of-the-mill settings; the former is lovely and the Lallans accents in the latter are winning. Much of Mrs. Spark's diamond dialogue has been kept. Ronald Neame has directed with cozy-matinee competence. And there are two outstanding performances.

Celia Johnson returns to the screen after ten years' absence. In this country she is probably best known for *Brief Encounter* (1946) in which she and Trevor Howard elevated wistful suburban adultery as close as it will ever come to tragedy. I saw her as Masha in a London production of *The Three Sisters* in 1951, and merely to write those words is to feel again her moment of farewell with Vershinin (Ralph Richardson). Now Miss Johnson is back. Wrinkled. When she first appeared in this film, I – and many in the audience – gasped. Her face, like all loved actors' faces, is a calendar. But these calendars tell more than the passing of time, they tell us what time does. Miss Johnson is still beautiful, of course, and now with a beauty free of vanity.

And, of course, she is still a fine actress. Her performance of Miss Mackay, the headmistress, has dignity without pomp and a patient self-reliance even when she seems to be utterly in the wrong. It was a bright stroke of casting to put her in the role. All through the film, sympathy runs for Miss Brodie and against the headmistress. Finally it is clear that, despite her seeming stodginess, Miss Mackay was the sounder of the two. And Miss Johnson's quiet tenacity works retroactively at the end.

As Miss Brodie, Maggie Smith improves through the picture, but she improves as Mrs. Allen's character, not Mrs. Spark's. Miss Smith seems to be playing Jean Brodie's affectations, instead of playing Jean Brodie, a woman with affectations. Mrs. Allen never gives her actress the chance to explore the tension between known and unknown drives that makes the novel's Brodie so terrible; but the filmscript does provide some "big" scenes that Miss Smith handles with certainty.

Robert Stephens plays the art instructor, Mr. Lloyd – with two arms, instead of the novel's more interesting one-armed war veteran. Stephens is a good actor, but the part has been reduced to a conventional corduroy-jacketed free soul among puritans. The girls in Miss Brodie's set are all nice.

The whole film proves – dare I say this again? – that the better a novel is, the less successful an adaptation of it is likely to be. Form and content cannot be easily peeled apart in good works and neatly reassembled. As for the argument that a film made from a novel ought to be judged on its own merits, it applies only when the novel is forgettable; Mrs. Spark's is not. Even the unfortunates who haven't read the book may not be entirely happy with the film; it is unfocused for anyone. The book's admirers will get some reminders of it in somewhat vulgarized form, some glimpses of wonderful Edinburgh, some lightning flashes in Miss Smith's performance, and Celia Johnson.

A melancholy half-hour comes to us from the Soviet Union – a short made up of still photographs from Serge Eisenstein's lost film *Bezhin Meadow*, accompanied by a voice-over introduction and narration.

By the mid-1930's Eisenstein was in doubtful status with the Soviet regime. Stalin himself had ordered changes in the director's previous film, *The General Line*, saying to Eisenstein, with the wit that endeared him to millions: "Life must prompt you to find the correct end for the film." In 1935 Eisenstein began work on *Bezhin Meadow*, a Turgenev story adapted to pose a generational conflict in revolutionary Russia. In the village of the title, a reactionary peasant father finds himself on the opposite side of the struggle from his young son and ends by shooting the boy.

The film was made in the political climate that culminated in the Moscow trials of 1938. When it was finished, revisions were ordered. Eisenstein then worked on a new script with a man

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Anatole Broyard: A Sort of Moby Dick

Portnoy's Complaint by Philip Roth

(Random House; $6.95)

Early in *Portnoy's Complaint*, the hero discovers that he has an undescended testicle. The image sticks in the mind, because one feels that, as a writer, Philip Roth has had a similar problem. *Goodbye, Columbus*, which made his reputation, is a talented book by a young man whose voice is still changing. *Letting Go* impresses one as the work of a promising but temporarily impotent imagination. *When She Was Good* is absolutely without vital juices – one of those unreadable novels that good writers, through some inexplicable alchemy, occasionally produce.

Now that the testicle has begun to descend, in *Portnoy's Complaint*, we can see that it is not an unmixed blessing. For the first half, the book is a sort of *Moby Dick* of masturbation; in the second part, Portnoy masturbates with girls, a change only in the *dramatis personae*.

The book is a kind of *Catch-22* of sexuality, and much funnier. More Jewish even than *A Mother's Kisses* and *To an Early Grave*, it is also part of a growing rebellion against the old highbrow or "orthodox" Jewish novel of ideas. In fact, it appears that the orthodox novel is already so done in that *Herzog* – the ultimate halvah of the Jewish intellectual – may go down in literary history as the last great convulsion of this kind of writing.

Like Einstein, Freud and Salk, Herzog was a prodigy of humaneness, the quality that has always been the pride and strength of the Jew. But like a statue in a public park, the Jew in literature is a prey to the climate. The climate now is sexy: Portnoy, then, is a sexual prodigy, a real (matzoh) ballsy guy. Like the homosexual and Negro, the Jew seems finally to have emancipated himself. After centuries of sublimation, he's exposing himself in Brentano's window. He has discovered his id, and if you think the Jewish super-ego was formidable, just wait.

Portnoy's problem is that he has a mother. As any casual reader of contemporary fiction knows, only Jewish writers have mothers. It may even be the same one. At any rate, she fills Portnoy with doubts about himself; to counteract these doubts, he masturbates continually, as if to say "I feel: therefore I am." When he is old enough to attempt girls, he can only invest this one part of himself in them. They are merely images or engines for his pleasure or reassurance.

Although there may have been others, we are told only about the Gentile girls, those who are not kosher, but Pure Food and Drug Act products. Portnoy tries to circumvent his history by climbing out of his mother's lap into Kay Campbell's or Sarah Abbott Maulsby's. His *shikse* mistresses divide into two types: those in whose mouth neither butter nor Portnoy will melt, and The Monkey, an ex-model who has been so jewed down in her personality by the author that she is *all* sex. But – poor Portnoy! – he can no more forgive The Monkey's 1969 ways of exciting him than the others' failures.

Some of Portnoy's sexual ups and downs are amusing enough to guarantee them a place in our folklore. Bubbles Gerardi, a Neanderthal nymphomaniac, almost turns what was to be his deflowering into an uprooting. Kay Campbell, a big butter churn of a girl, takes him home for Thanksgiving, and there, in the Midwest, he is introduced to the ineffable element in American life, and comes to understand the metaphysics, you might say, of complacency. Sarah Abbot Maulsby, the pilgrim, is Portnoy's wet dream of conspicuous consumption, but when he actually gets her into his bed, he finds it a pretty cut-and-dried business. The Monkey, who lasts longer than the others, is an oxymoron: a sexy *shikse*. She pays for it by being an ordinary moron too, as she leads Portnoy down the garden path of his pathology.

There are two Jewish girls in the book, and these are notoriously less successful creations, either because they're too close to home, or because Jewish girls are inherently less absurd, when you turn them upside down, than *shikses*. Portnoy meets these soul sisters when he abandons the marriage-bent Monkey in Greece and flees to Israel.

Yes, unfortunately, that's the symbol Roth has chosen to impose on Portnoy's search for self-through-sex. In an ending that is not an epiphany, but a punch line, Portnoy is impotent in Israel. He can't rise to Jewish girls. *Nu*, what else is new?

Though the novel is a triumph for Roth – he has thrown his *yarmulke* in the air and *let go* as he had promised in his second book – it may be something less for readers who feel they've been here before, who've been told these stories, with slight variations for better or worse, in midtown bars. Others may hear in *Portnoy's Complaint* the boastful whine of a patient raking over the ashes of his analysis. And, in fact, this is the scheme of the book.

The device is very congenial to Roth, and he moves easily in it. There's a feeling of spontaneous combustion through all but the end of the book; you can tell that the author is riding a hot streak. His ear is just about perfect and his invention hardly ever seems – as it all too often does in the new Jewish novel –merely manic.

Talking to someone – even though the analyst is a rather unconvincing presence – allows Roth to achieve all the me-to-you immediacy, all the rhetorical effects, of direct address. But it is limiting too, because it narrows the possibilities to only those things Portnoy would *say*. The rhetor-

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ic is all oral. And it evitably tends toward Jewish writing of the familiar sort, depending on exclamations, hyperboles and italics, and eliminating, except for a few short passages, any other kind of modulation.

Though the satire in *Portnoy's Complaint* is generally first-rate, the book hardly ever rises to irony. Irony requires dimension, the possibility of grandeur, and what we have here is a series of caricatures. Father, mother, sister, mistresses – even Portnoy himself – each has one act, one *shtik*. Mother is a statue of illiberty; father a constipated *nebbish;* sister a fat, graceless non-*shikse;* each of the mistresses merely one of the main currents in American thought. And Portnoy is not so much a human being as a monomaniacal hangup.

Everything is as oversimplified as a comic strip. This is not the tickle of catastrophe or Santayana's "golden laughter" – it's closer to the brassy stand-up comic kind. And the comparison is not flattering, because the Jewish comic has so far anticipated the Jewish writer that when he turns out a funny novel, much of it seems dated. We feel a sense of *déja-vu,* for Sid Caesar, Lenny Bruce, Mort Sahl, Nichols and May – to name just a few – were working Portnoy's territory more than ten years ago. This is especially true of the family scenes; in the sexual passages, Roth has the advantage over the comics in being less censored than they are – or were.

In spite of these reservations, *Portnoy* is sure to be regarded as a kind of literary Second Coming. Halfway between Oy! and Wow! it proves that the Jew is just as good a jerk, just as magnificently and mysteriously irrational, as any *goy.* In fact, it may well earn immortality on even another ground: that it is the first novel to be written by a Jew who was voted one of the hundred best-dressed men in the world.

Grateful readers, when they can stop laughing, will cry *Sholom!* But there may also be a few cranks here and there who will say to Roth, like the analyst in the last line of the book, "Now vee may perhaps to begin."

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Howard Kaye: The Old and the New

The Beastly Beatitudes of Balthazar B by J. P. Donleavy

(Delacorte; $6.95)

J. P. Donleavy's new novel would be worth buying if only for the jacket photo. It shows Donleavy, wearing a set of baggy knickers, in front of a crenelated and colonnaded country house. The author, shoulders slumped and head thrust forward, confronts the reader with a glare of stupefied truculence. The combination of the old-fashioned clothes and setting, and the simian modernity of Donleavy's expression, is emblematic of his novel. *Balthazar* is cast in the mode of a traditional *bildungsroman,* a chronicle of early development, and it retains many of the trappings of Victorian sentimentalism we associate with novels like *David Copperfield.* At the same time it has, like the modern anti-novel of alienation, a pervasive sense of separation, loss, and futility.

Balthazar B, son of wealthy French parents, loses his father in the first few pages. Sent to an English boarding school, he makes friends with a boy called Beefy, a delightful character who is before long expelled for inscribing on the blackboards "I am the magnificent masturbator." At 12, Balthazar falls in love and bed with his nanny. They are discovered in a compromising situation by Balthazar's mother, the girl leaves, and only much later does Balthazar learn that he has had a son, never to be known.

Balthazar appears next as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Dublin. Painfully shy and lonely, he spends most of his time at the races until he meets the beautiful Fitzdare, the novel's romantic heroine. Beefy turns up again, a high-spirited diabolist and sexual athlete. He wallows in sin,

"Deepest most sordid sin. I have been to the latrines. But I am randy again. I have other places too. Come. The deepest and most sordid

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sin purifies. I bugger old men. I lay old ladies. Some of them are dying when I do it."

On his way home, drunk on sherry after his first conversation with Miss Fitzdare, Balthazar loses himself in someone's yard, pulls down a clothesline, and is taken by a hysterical woman for a Mohammedan rapist. He keeps to his room for weeks, but Fitzdare seeks him out, loyal in feminine purity. Sent down after being caught with Beefy and a couple of girls Beefy has smuggled into his college rooms, Balthazar spends a fevered night with one of them, a barmaid from the country who can't get enough of his pallid beauty. (As in all Donleavy's novels, there is a tendency to measure out the hero's life in erotic encounters.) Balthazar spends an idyll at Miss Fitzdare's family manor in Ireland, and accepts her offer of marriage. In London he is informed by his lawyers that the other parties to the marriage negotiations have withdrawn without explanation. Dejected, he allows himself to be trapped into another marriage, for his money. Beefy, disinherited by his grandmother, sinks into the working class as he searches desperately for an heiress to marry. Balthazar learns that Fitzdare has died as a result of a fall from a horse, this being the reason for the broken engagement. Beefy, pawning heirlooms to raise a last deluge of roses, hooks an heiress who "said she married him because she likes men with big pricks so she wouldn't have to strain her eyes." On returning from a strenuous and lavish honeymoon, he discovers the heiress has a bank balance of 87 pounds. Balthazar's wife leaves him, and he has a brief affair with his French maid. The book ends with Balthazar's mother dead, Balthazar sad, lonely, missing "others gone goodbye in my years."

Donleavy retains an old-fashioned, Victorian belief in the beauty and sanctity of love. Fitzdare is the spiritual passion of Balthazar's life, but each of his love scenes is conducted with innocent relish, wonder, a blooming of exaltation and comfort. The scene in which Lizzy Fitzdare gives herself to Balthazar is (in no pejorative sense) sweet:

"So hard to believe I am the first. But she said you are. And if I am. The first. How are you like you are. So unafraid. To give me your body. And just take off your clothes like that. In a jiffy. She said it's all because I wanted to. Over all these months at Trinity. I planned to get you just like this. Right here in this bed. Even on this day of the week and week of the month, with moonlight in the window."

By putting Balthazar through a promiscuous course of sex scenes, Donleavy earns the right, both to indulge in sentiment in portraying Balthazar's spiritual fidelity to Fitzdare, and throughout to an innocent conception of the holiness of love. Visiting Fitzdare's grave, Balthazar reflects:

"You will never go away. See all of you through the tears that cover my eyes. Wind blows in the yew. Soft red berries dropped with a green shadowy seed. The musty smell of boxwood. When you looked at me and I looked back we each said all our words. It matters only what private things we know and have never spoken. Or will ever speak. Take up the years that come. To carry you with me wherever I go. Face any loneliness. Know I'm not alone."

Fitzdare's death is gratuitous. But the sudden death of the heroine in the middle of the novel is only the most striking instance of the basic structural principle of the book: the denial of traditional expectations of plot and character development. The novel proceeds episodically and randomly, as I suppose life sometimes does, and the only connection of the episodes is that Balthazar always ends up where he started, bereft. Love and loss, love and loss, the theme repeats itself until 403 pages have accumulated, a convenient bulk. Balthazar, timid, polite, woebegone, has not changed or learned anything at the end of the novel, shows no sign of entering a new phase or forging anything in the smithy of his soul. *Bildungsroman* without *bildung*, traditional form dissolved in melancholy.

This mood has been growing on Donleavy since *The Ginger Man*. Terrible things happened to Sebastian Dangerfield, shit fell from the ceiling, but he was a scoundrel who left it for other people to clean up, and his irresponsible gaiety in the face of misfortunes (most of them his own fault) made a

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stronger impression than the malignity of his fate. And, like a good picaresque rogue, Dangerfield was saved at the end of the novel by a mechanized god, a lost friend suddenly come into money. George Smith in *A Singular Man*, who gets mysterious threatening letters and whose great love, Sally Tomson, dies with scarcely more poetic necessity than Fitzdare, represents another step along the way from gaiety to melancholy; but in a pinch he still is capable of outrageous barbarism. *The Saddest Summer of Samuel S* gives us a character almost entirely passive in the grip of bad times and stale neuroses.

In *Balthazar* Donleavy has completely spun off the rogue from the sufferer, the active from the passive principle of character. Beefy (whose real name is Balthazar too) takes over all the functions of adventure, insult, and outrage, leaving the main character, Balthazar, little but passive sensitivity. Things happen to him: sometimes good things, sometimes funny things, eventually always bad things. Balthazar is a loser, a charming, frank, perpetual loser, like the chap in *L'il Abner* who carries his own rain cloud around with him:

> "Miss Fitzdare I think it would really be better for me to admit right now to you that I am utterly and absolutely bewildered by this land. From the moment I stepped off the boat till now. I'm dazed. I'm frozen out of my wits in my rooms. And forgive me. I have been constipated for weeks. I haven't an idea what's being said by the professor in zoology. When I see all of you just cutting up your dogfishes the way you do, and somehow I cut into mine, and in my dogfish it simply didn't have a ninth and fifth nerve. I looked all over. I'm absolutely positive."

Balthazar falls into the characteristic contemporary genre of characters who are interesting less for what they do or understand than for how exquisitely they suffer. The hero as sufferer is most strikingly the province of Jewish novelists, but he is a ubiquitous figure, cropping up as Updike's Rabbit Angstrom, Flannery O'Connor's Hazel Motes, Malcolm Lowry's Sigbjorn Wilderness, even perhaps Styron's Nat Turner. Such anguished and narcissistic characters define current versions of the novel of sensibility.

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Donleavy, as ever, is unsurpassed in comic set-pieces: for example, a scene in which Balthazar's first (and last) cohabitation with his wife is interrupted when her yelps of ecstasy, taken by a group of neighbors for cries of distress, bring a self-righteous party of inspection into their bedroom. Donleavy's reviewers like to use words like "madcap" and "irreverent," which, though I think they describe his essential qualities as a writer, are decreasingly applicable to the books he writes. *Balthazar* has the fortuitous plot, the one-dimensional characters, and the hilarious scenes of a comic or farcical novel; but it all serves a grim vision of loss. Adhering as he does to comic conventions, Donleavy eschews the depths, but his book is marvelously funny in parts, and quite moving as a whole.

Joseph Epstein: The Stranger

Selected Critical Writings of George Santayana
Edited by Norman Henfrey
(Cambridge; two volumes, $9.50 each)

Santayana on America by George Santayana
Edited by Richard Colton Lyon
(Harbinger; $3.75)

The Birth of Reason and Other Essays by George Santayana
Edited by Daniel Cory
(Columbia; $5.00)

George Santayana traveled light. His entire wardrobe consisted of two black suits, two black ties, two pairs of shoes, half a dozen white shirts, a black felt hat, and a winter and a spring overcoat. Patriotism, ambition, sexual passion were not part of his emotional luggage. After leaving Harvard and America in 1812, he spent the last 40 years of his life in Europe, living for the most part in hotels. His books, which were scattered around the world in the homes of friends, seem to have been his only property. "Material possessions as well as people," his disciple and literary executor Daniel Cory noted of Santayana's later years, "could be potent sources of distraction." He took a quiet delight in considering himself "a back number." He felt the telephone to be an impediment, and used a fountain pen for the first time in 1948. When his former pupil Walter Lippmann visited him in Rome in 1929, Santayana asked: "Is there anything going on in America that I should know about?" When Edmund Wilson arrived to interview him after the Second World War, he didn't know who Wilson was.

Perhaps the quality of detachment was overrefined in Santayana; surely it was in large part what tended to put people off. When asked whether he liked Santayana, the historian Gaetano Salvemini, answered: "No – *with enthusiasm.*" Van Wyck Brooks, another of Santayana's pupils, had very little good to say about him. Lionel Trilling, whose estimate is much more subtle and sympathetic, remarked in reviewing his letters that it would not be difficult to dislike him. Not, one suspects, that any of this would have greatly surprised Santayana, or even much distressed him. So fine a mind could scarcely have been unaware of

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its effect on others. "My preferences," he wrote in *Persons & Places*, his autobiography, "were clearly marked and out of harmony with my surroundings and, as I soon felt, with my times. . . . I never undertook to change myself."

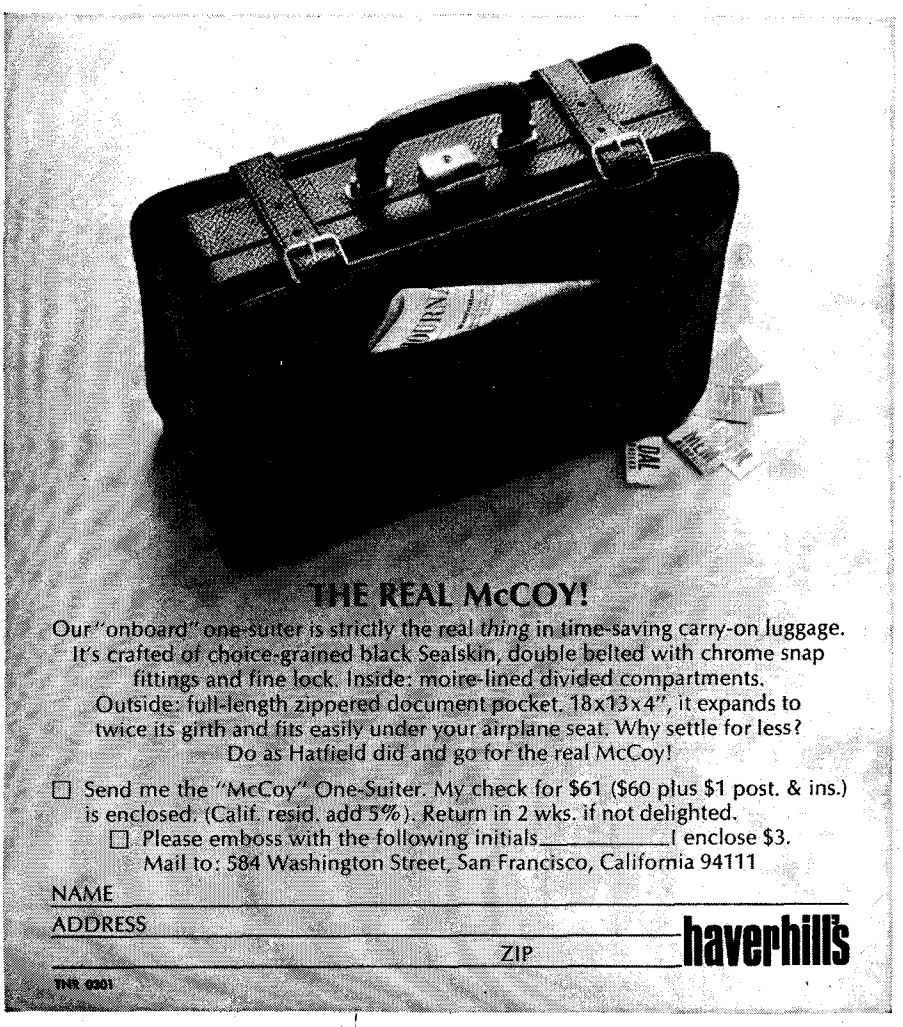
He was an outsider, a stranger, a *déraciné*. Brought up by his father in the walled city of Avila in Spain, at the age of eight Santayana was shipped to his mother's home in Boston. As Brooks put it, "he had been hatched from a Spanish duck's egg in a Yankee barn-fowl's nest." The transplant never quite took. Although he was popular enough as a student at the Boston Latin School and later at Harvard, he never felt comfortable in America. He was not alone in this, for the America of the last decades of the 19th and the early decades of the 20th centuries was far from hospitable to its own finer sensibilities. Santayana, Berenson, Henry James – such men either fled the country at the first opportunity or, like Adams, remained at home and turned sour. Only the more virile minds – William James and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., for example – managed to stick it out and remain intact.

As a teacher, Santayana was considered an ornament of Harvard's philosophy department; but he felt out of synch with the intellectual machinery dominant there, with its "damnable worldliness and snobbishness." One of his students, the stage designer Lee Simonson, remembers him teaching class while "gazing over our heads as if looking for the sail that was to bear him home." He never, in fact, found teaching suitable to his nature, and considered his true vocation to be that of a student: "Scholarship and learning of any sort seemed to me a means, not an end. I always hated to be a professor." After his mother's death in 1912, he found himself with independent means. Without hesitation, and against great pressure to remain, he immediately resigned from Harvard. He was 49 years old, a bachelor, and free at last. He sailed for Europe and never returned.

Forty working years were left to him, and he made the most of them. He became a writer of passionate vocation, whereas in America he was merely a teacher who also wrote. In Europe he stretched out intellectually, turning out books, essays, and reviews, regularly adding to an exceedingly diversified literary production, which in the end was to include, in addition to technical philosophy, fiction, social commentary, poetry, autobiography, political philosophy, and literary criticism. All this work is remarkably of a piece, all is of a very high quality, all proceeded out of a mind of exceptional orderliness and limpidity. It is said Santayana spoke in an English so pure of accent that no one could hope to locate him by his speech. The same may be said of his prose: though always recognizably his own, it is outside any single literary tradition. Possessing a strong current of his own, he apparently felt no need to swim in anyone else's mainstream.

Santayana finally settled on Rome as a home base. "I could not be more at home anywhere [else]," he later wrote, "while preserving my essential character of stranger and traveler, with the philosophic freedom that this implies." Most of the writings in these three collections were composed in the mornings in his room at his favorite hotel overlooking the Piazza Barberini. Clearly, it is the work of a man well above the traffic. As his work reflects his life, so Santayana's prose reflects his mind, radiating greater serenity than warmth, balance than passion, insight than argument – light than heat.

Professor Norman Henfrey's two-volume collection of Santayana's best-known essays and significant excerpts from his books is ably selected, and carefully edited, with an intelligent introduction. Professor Richard Colton Lyon's *Santayana on America* is focussed on Santayana's complex, always perceptive thoughts about the country in which he for so long felt ill at ease.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Lester's father, Ray, used to work in the coal mines, but since the mines "played out" he's been unemployed. As Tressie admits, "It's awful hard going. We never could get us a good start before." They still wouldn't have a "start" if it weren't for the Cossum family.

Ed and Martha Cossum live in a suburban community of contemporary homes. Looking out back you can see one of those large, above-ground plastic swimming pools. And you can see the beginnings of a redwood deck around the pool, which Ed and his two children, Bill and Carol, are building themselves.

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The Winter of our Discontent

Each day the earlier dark,
Each dark the strengthened cold.
Blame the fat Utility, blame rich Oil,
Blame the Old,

Those profiteers of winter.

Say, "Thou hast played most foully for it –
For Glamis, Cawdor, all."
Say the sun is rigged, and the jet-stream.
Blast City Hall,

Kiddo.

Confront, refute, confound, conspire,
And in your turn shake a leg
To convert the cold to profit,
The dark to a nest egg.

Yes, my America,

For each green fang and claw
Let the season's loot be spread,
As each day the winter widens,
And rude sons strike rude fathers

Dead.

REED WHITTEMORE

Letter From Genoa

I look across a sphere of open water
Full of mauve shadows and possible squalls,
A reservoir that locks some mariners up
And beckons others by its lack of walls.
I stare again, across the painted water,
Picturing Vespucci at the outer lip
And Columbus, taut for India in three barks.
I think of navigation, how it works

And how it fails. Did it ever occur to the pilot,
Finding the sea fogged over, the stars lost,
And no Copernicus when they needed him most,
That if they should happen to ram an islet
In mid Atlantic, somebody'd have to face
The prosaic damage, the ultimate disgrace?

ALLAN BLOCK

Daniel Cory's collection, the slimmest of the three, includes a sonnet and a number of pieces of varying length that have either not been published previously or have not appeared in book form. It represents the final collection of Santayana's work, and, one takes it, marks the end of Mr. Cory's chores as his literary executor – a task he has performed with the kind of discretion and industry that only the deepest respect makes possible. Taken together these three collections confirm Santayana's position as one of the most important and consistently intelligent men of letters of this country, and support Whitehead's contention that of all the philosophers of his time Santayana was the one most likely to be read in the future.

The collections are all marked by what Professor Lyon calls Santayana's "difficult virtues: his scope, his detachment, the unrelenting energy of his conceiving." Santayana was of course completely aware of his own virtues, and of the discomfort they sometimes caused his contemporaries. "There is a certain pleasure and excitement in being ultra critical and modern, while remaining perfectly orthodox," he once remarked of himself. In all his writing he did not strive after imperishable theories, but rather after a way of thinking and feeling. This, too, was by design. "I never wished to be original, so as to contribute to the growth of science. All I care for is to sift the *truth* from traditional imagination, without impoverishing the latter." He felt that what was needed to understand the world was not more data but more mind.

Santayana was very Hellenistic in spirit, and indeed he said that of all periods in history the Hellenistic, between Alexander and Caesar, best corresponded to his feeling. One mark of this is the desire for completion that informs his best literary criticism, much of which has been brought together in the first of Professor Henfrey's two volumes. Who but Santayana would have detected the nearly total absence of religious feeling in the plays of Shakespeare? Who also would have said of T. S. Eliot that he "is honest and brave, but limited"? or of Bertrand Russell: "He left no monument – unless it be the early *Principia Mathematica* – that does justice to his powers and gives him a place in history"? In his justly famous attacks on

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Whitman and Browning it is, again their incompleteness, their concern with the immediate and the sensational to the neglect of the fundamental and ultimate, that is behind his claim that neither man is in the first rank. Santayana's standards were not merely high but almost universal. The above judgments seem not at all carping when one realizes that he is measuring Russell against genius, Eliot against the supreme poets, and Shakespeare against literary perfection.

Santayana's yearning for completion was balanced by a sense of the limitation of things: of friendship, of art, of life itself. "True vice," he wrote, "is human nature strangled by the suicide of attempting the impossible." This makes it rather easy to put him down for a certain bloodlessness, a deficiency in enthusiasm. Yet one of his great glories as a critic is that he can take the exact measure of a work, in many instances find it wanting, prick it where it is weakest, and still manage to miss none of its splendor. Even in the act of deflation, Santayana's appreciation of a poet or philosopher's peculiar gifts is generally subtler, more rounded, finally deeper, than most admirers'.

The portrait of Santayana as an ascetic, as a man who, once he had constructed the edifice of his philosophy, disappeared inside it, has been overdone. After all, it was he who claimed that "the world is not a myth, to be clarified by a little literary criticism." He had a streak of intense practicality; how else, in fact, could he have devised a life of such careful order for himself? "Please," he once wrote to Cory, "on my authority and Balzac's, to consider it an axiom that money is the petrol of life." He read everything, and even if he did not care for a writer's tendency, he would never seal himself off from true talent. "I have got the works of Rimbaud," he noted in another letter to Cory, "the father (at eighteen) of the all the crazy poetry and painting since perpetuated. But he is a great and true genius, with a heart." Nor could he too long draw sustenance on too ethereal a plane. "I am reading the *Bhagavadgita*, and have sent for two of Anthony Trollope's novels to redress the balance." He deeply admired Dickens, and pronounced him (highest compliment!) "a good philosopher." In 1947, at the age of 84, it was with great excitement that he discovered the poetry of Robert Lowell.

Still, he found himself out of phase with his times, though he felt more glad than grieved about this. He found ours to be a fanatical age, an age of propaganda, and he chose to keep his distance from it and to indulge in his modest comforts; enjoying the sun, the occasional companionship of his few friends, his cosmopolitan's correspondence. The Second World War put an end to most of these little indulgences, however, and Santayana, rather than hazard a difficult move in his late seventies, checked into the Hospital of the Blue Nuns, a convent run by an Irish order outside Rome.

It was with the Blue Nuns that he spent the last 11 years of his life. He was stripped to essentials now, living in a single room containing only a work table and a small bed concealed by a screen. After conversing with him in this room, Edmund Wilson called him "perhaps the most international – or, better, the most supernational – personality I had ever met." His health, which had long been fragile, began to slip, and he was discovered to be dying of cancer of the stomach. He completed the work on his last book, *Dominations and Powers*, and turned, in his last months, to clearing up the very few loose ends in his otherwise astonishingly orderly life. His passion for completeness now turned in on him. "If I am a circle

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half drawn," he noted, "I yearn to complete it." His only remaining wish was to live long enough to polish a translation he had been working on. Toward the end, his dear friend Cory asked him if he were suffering. "Yes, my friend," Santayana replied. "But my anguish is entirely physical; there are no moral difficulties whatsoever." He died that night, and the circle closed round a life that was itself a rare work of art.

Clarence Brown: Paronomasia and I'll Tell You No Lies

Satirical Stories of Nikolai Leskov

Translated and edited by
William B. Edgerton
(Pegasus; cloth $7.50; paper $2.95)

It is the fate of the great Russian writer Nikolai Leskov (1831-1895) to be chronically undiscovered by foreigners. This exasperates his champions but there are grounds for seeing merit in it, for it can be taken as evidence of his belonging so completely to his native language and people as to leave no residue. Like those wines of which the entire production is consumed locally, he is a great favorite with his own countrymen, who find scattered through his enormous literary leavings many instances of what they deem to be quintessentially Russian. It would therefore seem all the odder that his relatively few readers abroad should see him as unlike anything they have come to expect from Russian writers.

Actually, however, it is not so odd, for certain striking features do make him almost *sui generis*. First of all, there is his flabbergasting style, toward which the few English translations preceding the present excellent work have no more than gestured. Immensely inventive and versatile, Leskov had many manners. But the one for which he is best known is an imitation of oral speech studded with puns, illiteracies, and folk etymologies – in a word, with malapropisms.

Some of these he concocted himself and some he gleaned from his wanderings as a commercial traveller in the remote back alleys of the Empire. Leskov was a born lexicophile, a thing rare in the Russian 19th century. He amassed notebooks of word specimens with the acquisitive mania that drives other men to gather shells, stones, and stamps, but his purpose was literary, not scientific. For he shared with Dostoevsky – with whom he shared little else – the belief that the depiction of character in a work of prose was, to begin with, largely a matter of how a man talks. Get the heft and feel of his conversation and the rest will come.

Sure enough, the persons who materialize from this bizarre language are practically all, in one regard or another, freaks. They are outlandish not only in the sense of belonging to the hinterland but also in being physically grotesque. Leskov was much taken by giantism of one sort or another – he was, after all, a teller of tall tales – and his pages teem with everything from macrocephalics to overgrown young peasants with a moral purity as improbable as their growth. When the Tsar receives as a present from England a steel flea so small that it can be seen only by microscope, and some craftsmen from Tula salvage Russian honor by forging shoes for the flea, the gunsmith who made the *nails* for the shoes must also, to qualify as a Leskov character, be cross-eyed and left-handed.

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When one of these creatures embarks, as he almost inevitably does, upon the inner narrative at the core of a Leskov story, the language that comes from his mouth is hard to describe and takes a good deal of getting used to. Some of Leskov's contemporaries never could get used to it. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky differed in their general estimate of his work, but they agreed that this particular manner was baffling and impossible to like.

Examples will save time. A village priest, spying on a fellow train passenger whom he suspects of being a nihilist, reports, mangling the essentials as he goes, that the man may be concealing upon his person a revolver or dynamite. The English comes out "sick-shooter" and "nitroblistering." The Tula gunsmith has a go at the phrase "Apollo Belvedere." His near miss converts the second word to what, in Russian, would mean "half a bucket." The translation is "Apollo Velvet Ear." When a woman blends the Russian words for "miniature" and "nice" into one, the translator gives us "miniacute." Two stories of this collection, "The Steel Flea" and "Night Owls," are drenched in this kind of word-play, and it turns up sporadically in a good many others. It was and is Leskov's trademark.

Can it be translated? Leskov himself thought not, and it is clear that his previous translators into English have agreed, for they have all silently recoiled from the challenge of his language and given us instead Jerome K. Jerome: a humor of situation and incident conveyed in a glassily featureless prose. William Edgerton has manfully bearded this worst of all the demons of translation. The result is the first English version of Leskov that even suggests what the original must be like and why the Russians have never stopped reading it.

Hugh McLean, the translator of two stories in this book, has elsewhere sounded a note of prudent resignation concerning the possible reception of Leskov's linguistic tics in English: "The world has always been divided into punsters and antipunsters, and no amount of demonstration can ever prove the effectiveness of a joke." That is certainly true. "Pun" covers a lot of ground, though. Franklin P. Adams once distorted a line from Horace as the title of a movie review (Odi pro-

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fanum vulgus et RKO) which, in my opinion, ought to be admitted by the most confirmed antipunster as grounds for beatification. Others contain such concentrated comic insight as to be virtually epiphanous (Ring Lardner's line "'Shut up!' he explained."). But at the other end of the scale there is a kind of fatigued and mechanical word-play, the pun at its worst – mere wise-cracking. The slightest exposure to this can cause even those with a reasonable tolerance for puns suddenly to remember appointments in another city. Leskov's efforts extend over the whole range from inspiration to the merely perfunctory. I think, too, that the American ear will from time to time catch a distinct resonance (or twang) of Petroleum V. Nasby: a string of backwoodsy gauds and gimcracks, self-consciously corny. It may be, indeed, that a frontier tradition, which we share with the Russians as with few other nations, has made the American idiom a fertile ground for rendering this peculiarity. At any rate, the translators have striven – correctly, I think – rather to resemble than to improve their original.

Whether one cottons to this verbal bumptiousness or not, there is a good deal more to Leskov. The other aspect of his work that most sets him off from his fellow Russian writers is his concentration on plot. He is probably the best and certainly the most abundant story-teller of them all, and could squander in a few pages enough narrative material to stock an ordinary Russian author for a year. He was prodigal with incident. One of his pious giants, who has been trying to convert a band of Tartars, says: "So I stopped setting off fireworks and baptised them in the little river." Barthelme himself would admire the dispatch. From time to time the flow of plot appears to be unstaunchable – a veritable fabularrhea. This occurs, for instance, in the pun-ridden "Night Owls." The malaprop artist is a revolting woman whose voice is overheard by the narrator through the thin wall of some dismal religious hostel. The wearisomeness of her diction is exactly counterbalanced by the headlong plunge of her story. There is also something hypnotically loathsome about her. She interrupts herself now and then to make Lesbian passes at her listener, a woman much younger than herself (Leskov is also notable among his contemporaries for the frankness with which he detailed Russian carnality), but nothing else will stop her. The realization that Leskov is, after all, a thoroughly Russian writer comes slowly as we tumble through all the burlesque and the magic doubletalk to the moral point at the end.

Professor Edgerton is now at work on another volume of Leskov translations, comparable to this in size. It will display still other aspects of this little-known genius, and, given the meticulous care evident in the present work, will no doubt prove to be a literary event of equal dimensions. Finally to have made accessible in this degree and quantity one of the major writers of Russia's splendid century is a solid accomplishment.

Cento

(with thanks to Swift, Shakespeare, Fletcher, Pope, Frost, and Auden)

To shop in crowds the daggled females fly;
Tired with all these, for restful death I cry:
Care-charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
Soft as the fleeces of descending snows.
Now let the night be dark for all of me.
O, pray for us, the bourgeoisie.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

Correspondence

Simonides' Epitaph

Sirs:

Really, TRB! The Greek epitaph President Kennedy used to quote was none of the things you say it was (*NR*, Feb. 8), as I know, because I gave it to him. It was *not* written for Athenians who had fallen in battle in an unspecified foreign land. It was Simonides' epitaph (or the one very probably attributed to him) on the tomb of the Spartan Three Hundred, who fell to the last man trying to hold the narrow, sea-washed pass at Thermopylae against a Persian host so great "they drank the rivers dry." The Spartans, one must note, were the anti-Athenians of Greece, although on this occasion of the second Persian advance, Athens and Sparta were temporarily allied. Again, the epitaph was *not* written in prose, which was then cheapened by a verse translation as you suggested. The original is a beautifully formal elegiac couplet, to which the English translator, whose name I do not know, added rhyme to preserve the formality. The translation the President quoted runs as follows:

"Go stranger, and in Lacaedaemon tell
"That here, obedient to the laws, we fell."

Of the numerous translations I have seen, this seems to me the best, because it best conveys the laconic nobility that all Greek scholars find in the original. In it, the phrase, "obedient to the laws," is also allowably stretched. Simonides made the dead speak to passers-by who might see their monument in the pass; and my friend Emily Vermeule tells me that in the original the dead merely say, in literal translation, that they had done what they were "told to do," presumably by their Spartan ephors. But the laws, or at any rate the hallowed customs, of Sparta were what really produced the strange but glorious result at Thermopylae. The Spartan Three Hundred fell to the last man because the law or custom was that you had to do this, if your mission required it. Nothing less was accepted. This was proven, in turn, by the

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cases of the two Spartiates who had been sent to the rear before the battle because of eye-trouble, thought to have been acute pink-eye. When both were warned that battle would soon be joined, Eurytus fumbled on his armor, and made his helot-servant lead him into the pass, where he died with Leonidas and all the rest – no doubt uselessly, for if he had to be led, he must have been almost blind. In contrast, Aristodemus made what we should regard as the common sense choice, opposite to that of Eurytus. Yet when he got home, "no Spartan would give him light to kindle his fire," and he was put into coventry. There are two traditions concerning Aristodemus' end: the first, that he committed what one may call civil suicide; and the second, that he purged his dishonor by military suicide, excelling the bravest of the Spartiates at the battle of Plataea and thereby paying the penalty he sought.

It is also worth noting that our phrase, "selling the pass," almost certainly derives from Thermopylae. The seller of the pass was Ephialtes of Malis, a local man, who was well paid by the Persians for showing them the hard track through the mountains above the sea, past "the stone called Black-Buttock." Thus a contingent from the Persian host was able to outflank the Spartan position; and the Three Hundred, who had successfully held the pass against frontal attacks by seemingly overwhelming numbers, were of course doomed when they were simultaneously attacked from the rear. With Herodotus in their pockets, the Greeks and British in the second world war wrestled heavy guns onto the heights, and with the mountain-flank thus guarded, they held the pass by the sea against the Nazis far longer than Leonidas and the Three Hundred held it against the Persians. It must be added, however, that in our time the pass to be sold is seldom so simply geographical.

Joseph Alsop

Sirs:

No.

I must jump *you* [T.R.B., Feb. 8] for *your* garbling of Simonides of Ceos. Your version, while an improvement on the Kennedy couplet, lacks accuracy and grace. Try this, which has stuck with me since my brief and undistinguished career as a classical scholar (in the good old days, when Greek I and Greek II were, in combination, an acceptable substitute for Mathematics I):

"Go, stranger, and tell the Lacedaemonians that we lie here in obedience to their orders."

I cannot recall whether the "go" was in Simonides' Greek, but I am certain the Lacedaemonians were. In my view, the "go" version is by far the most poignant, even if it took a one-word liberty with Simonides.

Timothy J. Adams
Washington, D. C.

Aussie Draftees in Vietnam

Sirs:

In your issue of February 1, Robert K. Black refers in his letter to the conditions under which Australian and New Zealand forces serve in Vietnam. As far as Australian forces are concerned, his claim that service in Vietnam is not required of draftees is incorrect.

Under the revised National Service scheme introduced in 1964, all young men are required to register for national service on reaching the age of 20. Those who qualify are called up for a period of two years' full-time service in the Army. There is no limit to the area in which the soldier may be required to serve, and many have seen service in Vietnam. The percentage of national servicemen in the Australian Army Task Force in Vietnam

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has averaged about 50 percent since 1966, with the remainder made up of volunteer members of the Australian Regular Army. There is no difference in pay or other conditions of overseas service between national servicemen and members of the Regular Army. Since the national service scheme is confined to the Australian Army, all members of the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force, including those serving in Vietnam, are volunteers.

John Graham
Australian Embassy
Washington, D. C.

Kauffmann, *from page 22*

whom the sound-track of this short film calls "Writer Babel" – the great Isaac Babel, himself soon to disappear in the Stalinist maw. The second version, too, was unsatisfactory to officialdom. The Soviet gobbledygook is thick, but the real reason comes through in Marie Seton's biography of Eisenstein: despite his attempts at strict party obedience, art kept breaking in. In 1937 he published an apologia, *The Mistakes of Bezhin Meadow*. Those of us who sneer have to be very sure that we are heroes.

The narrator of this short film says that the bulk of Eisenstein's picture was destroyed by the German bombing of Mosfilm Studios during the Second World War. But before the war, writing in *Partisan Review* in 1938, Dwight Macdonald cited his sources for saying that the negative had been destroyed, burned for political heresy. The present exhibit seems a small attempt at atonement – and not a moment too soon, to judge by latest reports of changing attitudes towards Stalin's memory.

The short was assembled from surviving scraps by a Soviet director and a film critic. The stills are easily recognizable as the product of Eisenstein's vision and the eye of Edward Tisse, his favorite cameraman. The photographs convey the unique Eisenstein flavor – a distortion of reality that creates higher realism: a combination of masterly screen composition and masterly theatricality. And considering the grim facts that wrap the film, its revolutionary fervor is all the more painful. The very beauties of this salvage job underscore the pathos of what Macdonald has called, with much justice, "the saddest artistic career of our times."

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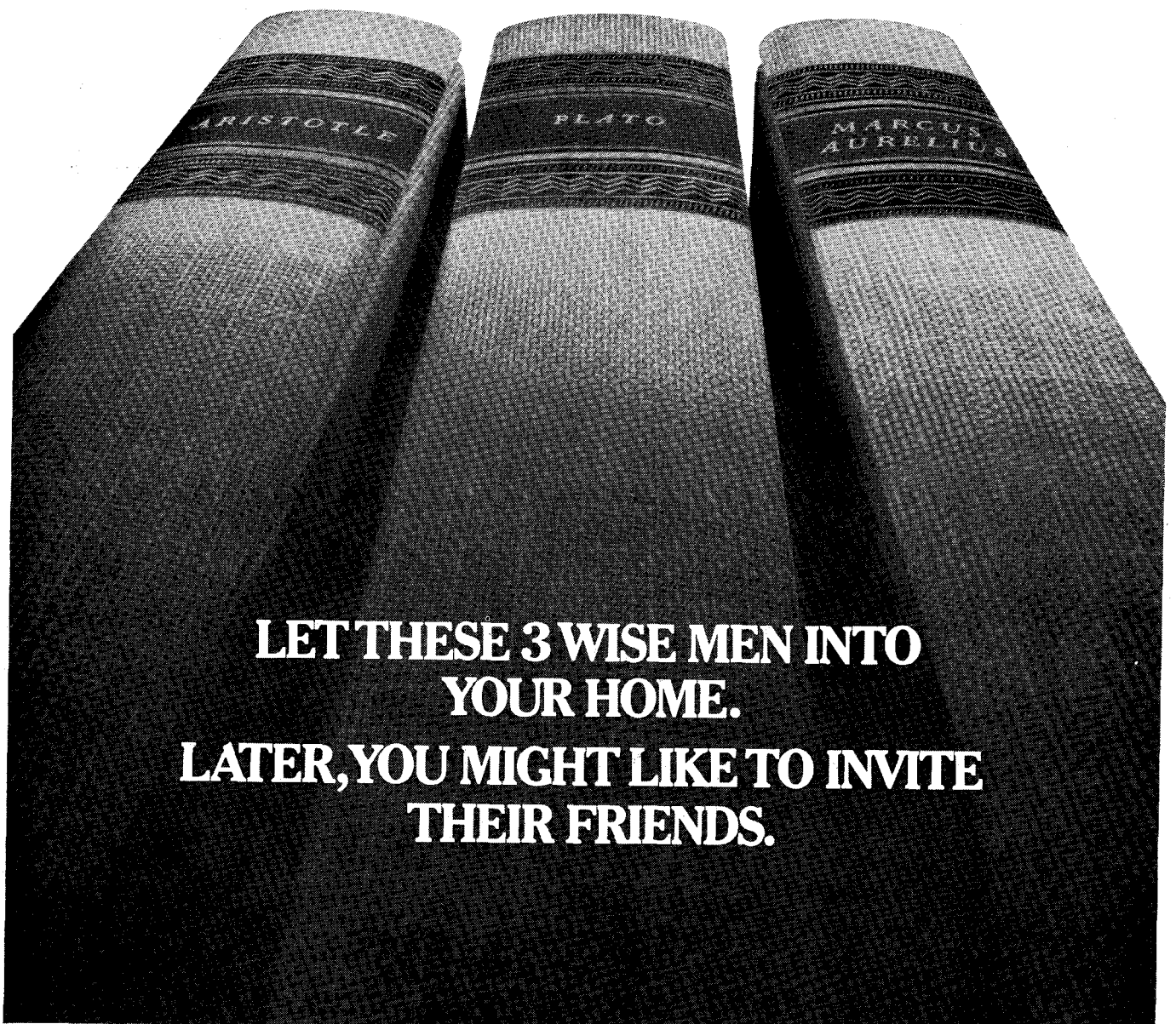

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